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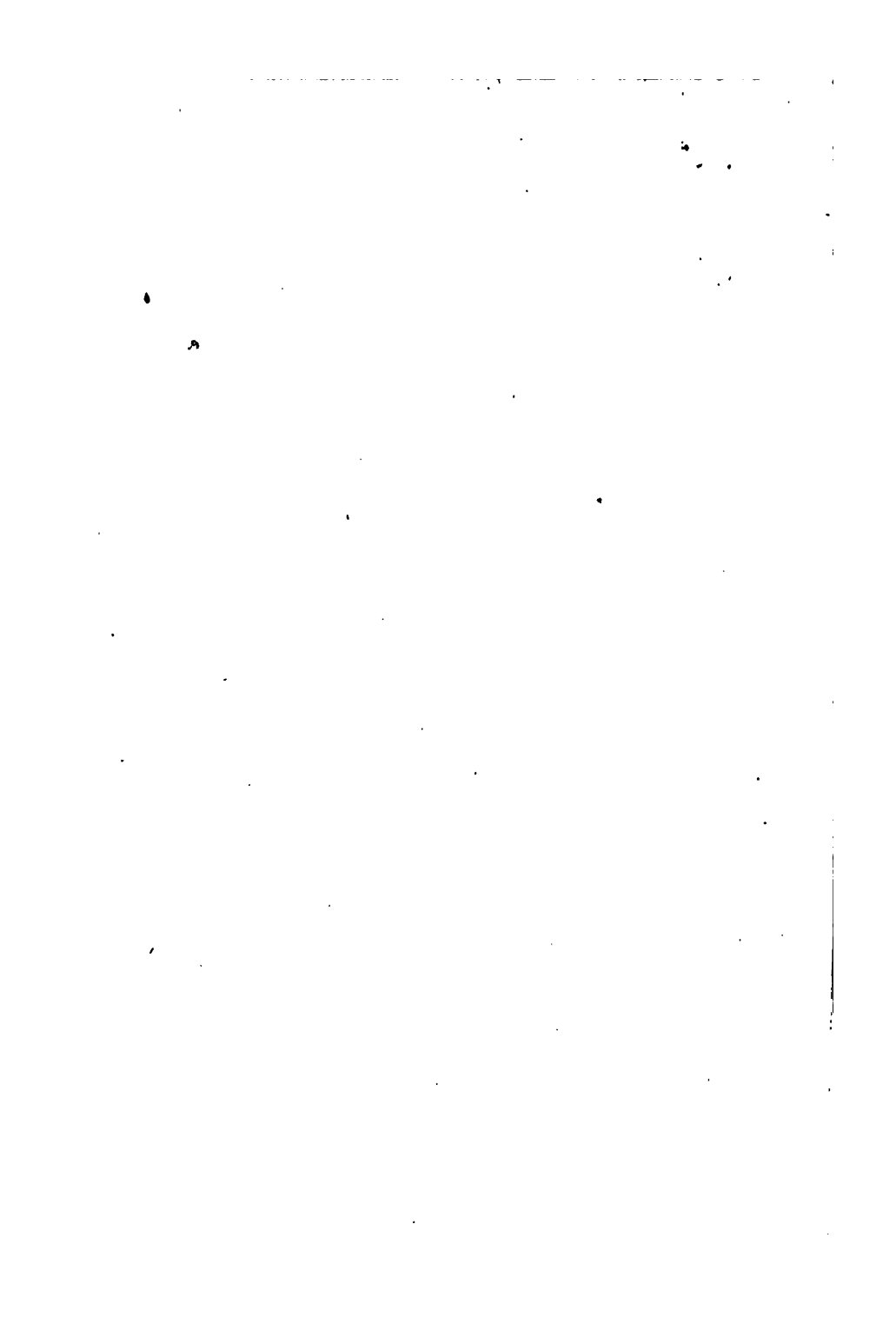
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C. KEGAN PAUL & CO., LONDON.

THE
GOSPEL OF HOME LIFE.

BY
MARK EVANS.



"To yield the religious sentiment, reasonable satisfaction, is the problem of problems at the present hour."—*Professor Tyndall's Belfast Address.*

C. KEGAN PAUL & Co., LONDON.
1877.

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P R E F A C E.

No Preface to this book seems called for, save a word apologetic for the title page.

If I could imagine myself able to provide reasonable satisfaction for the religious sentiment in the nature of man, a study of the past history of mankind would serve to do away with the illusion. That no man has been found who could offer this satisfaction to his fellows, and that how to do this, is confessedly "the problem of problems at the present hour," makes me believe the problem is insolvable by man.

But it is worth enquiring, whether whereas for our other faculties full and sufficient provision has been made, it is only to the religious sense, that reasonable satisfaction has been denied.

With this much ground for crediting its existence, it would be natural to seek it in the same direction as that from which other satisfaction comes—that is to say—close at hand. It is there, among our immediate surroundings, in the Home Life common to

us all, that I have been searching for it, and there that I believe it is provided. If it be there, no words of mine can either make or mar it.

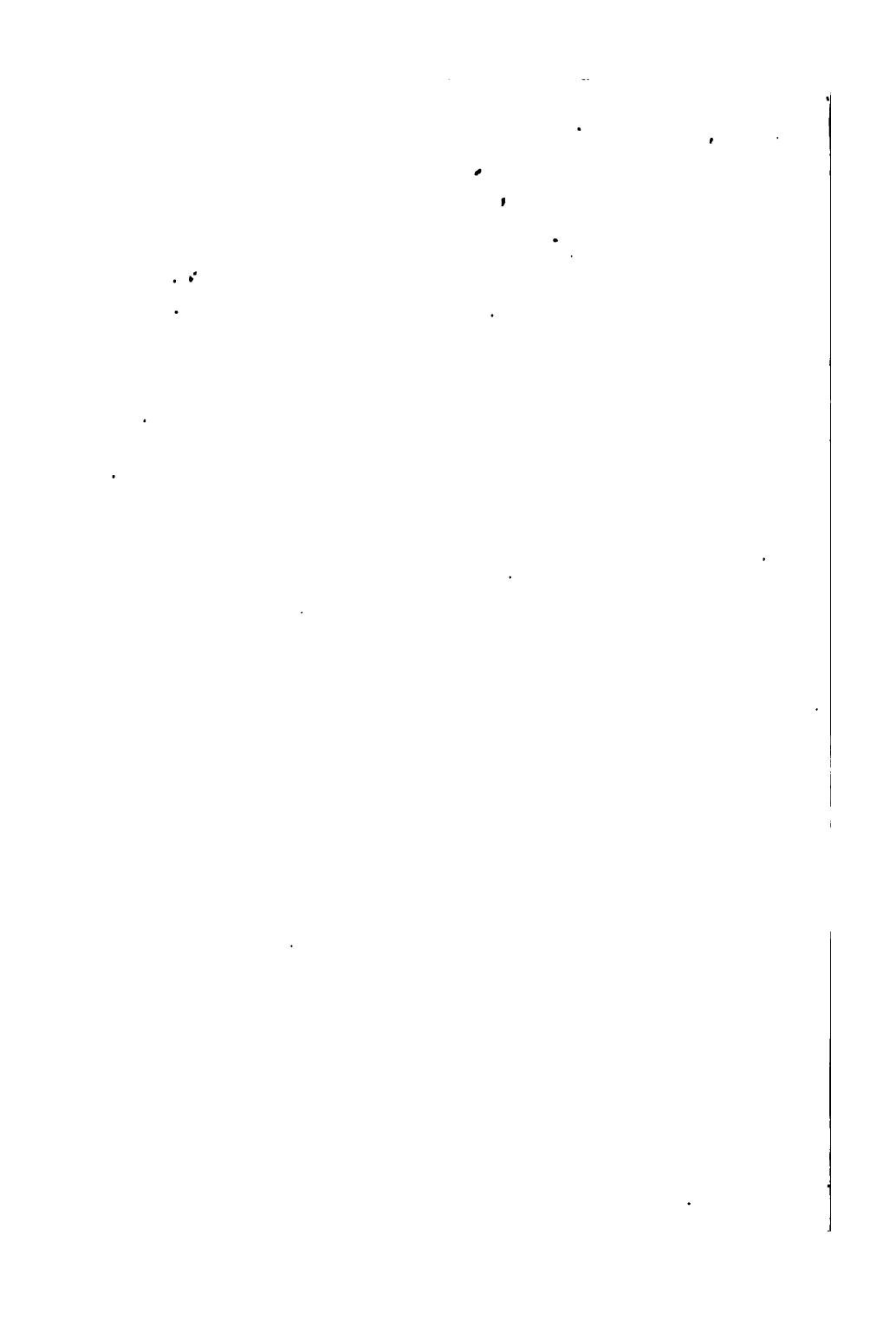
When a ship is wrecked and the crew are swimming for their lives, anyone who reaches land and feels the ground firm beneath him, must needs call to those he sees struggling with the waves and help them (if he can) to clamber up the cliff. I know that the tide is rising—that human knowledge is on the increase, and it may be that the ground on which we are standing now, may afford no sufficient shelter in the future; but for myself, I am persuaded that the growing light will make it plain, that the rock whereon we are cast, stretches out from the mainland of the country that lies hid from us in the shadows; so that even if it should be, that we are to be swept into the sea again, in God's name let us strike out manfully, ay; right through the breakers, for the rising tide must carry us onward to the land.

M. E.

LONDON, *October 1877.*

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THE GOSPEL OF HOME LIFE.

THE GOSPEL OF FATHERHOOD.

THE aspirations, "as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God;" "when I awake up after thy likeness, let me be satisfied with it!"—are the aspirations, of not an individual only nor even of a race, but of humanity. It is a Persian poet who sings—"O thou the cool shade at the door of weariness, even the wicked are panting for thee." From Egypt, the cradle of religious thought, there come down to us the words, "O God, thy creature crieth unto thee." In the sacred books of our great Aryan ancestors, it is written—"O that my spirit were united with the spirit supremely blessed, supremely wise."

The question put into the mouth of Zophar—"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" is the question, not of one man, but of the whole family of man. Egypt offered worship to "One who was, who art, who art to come, whose veil no man hath lifted;" the sage of China perceived that "the reason which can be reasoned, is

not the eternal reason, the name which can be named is not the eternal name." To the devout Buddhist, the Eternal was "hidden, indescribable, without name, inconceivable." The Persian looked up to his bright ideal and exclaimed, "human knowledge and thought combined can only spell the first letter of the alphabet of thy love."

The consciousness out of which spring alike the aspiration and the question, accounts for the existence of all religion, the articulate voice of which,—worship, has from the beginning spoken not merely love and adoration of the Eternal, but has borne witness by yearnings which could not be uttered, to a thirst for communion with Him, an insatiable craving to know Him. Of the few religions which have left the world a legacy of sacred writings, this is manifestly true; and going back to times and scenes where we must grope our way by the aid of broken monuments and half-obliterated hieroglyphics, the very stones may be heard crying out after an unknown God; in the materialism, which served Egypt in her search after the Divine—in the perhaps higher and more spiritual worship of Babylon and Assyria, may be heard an echo, unmistakeable though faint, of one and the self-same voice regarding the Eternal,—our heart is disquieted within us, until it resteth on thee. The idea can be identified, though the expression of it has varied—"I beseech thee," says Moses, "shew me thy glory." "Shew us the Father," is the prayer of

Philip, "and it sufficeth us." To this hour, there goes up the same aspiration of humanity—to this hour, Job's question is repeated.

That so many are seeking for an answer to it, is a hopeful sign of the present day. The search may not be flattering to orthodoxy—because it says as much as that the Churches' creeds and regulations have not satisfied the spirit of man, and for this reason, orthodoxy is naturally enough prejudiced against any new object, with which it is sought to appease man's aspiration and any new answers offered to his question.

The great, almost feverish interest, shewn in these answers, whenever they appear, is proof that thoughtful minds are not at rest in their position and would fain feel firmer ground, below the beliefs of childhood, some of which are sinking, inch by inch, into fabledom. For this reason, it is for every seeker after truth, to give due heed to the new teachers and to try their work of what sort it is. For unless ignorant superstition be a nobler and more divine thing than a thirst after the true, he is nearest to God who wrestles till the rising of the sun with one mightier than he, eternal truth itself, and who, conscious of his own weakness, can yet find strength to gasp, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me."

Not only do these attempted answers bear witness to the existence of the yearning which has marked man from the beginning, but they shew how the same

answers are offered in one age and another, just as men suffer themselves to be led, by one only, of what—for want of a better name—must be called *the senses of the soul*. The fact of such answers having failed to convince mankind thousands of years ago, will prepare us to find that in our own day, among our own people, the like oracular responses leave the old burden of unrest on the shoulders of a wearied humanity.

Yet there is no lack of earnestness, no want of sincerity and ability, in the answers which are being given to the soul's questionings; those from whom they come are too much in earnest to be deceived by ready-to-hand, meaningless utterances, and too true to accept words and phrases from which the life has departed.

We may listen and be thankful for the new teaching; none the less so, if it fail to satisfy; for the more it is studied, the more plain will it become where and why it fails; the more determined will be the search for "reasonable satisfaction to the religious sentiment in the nature of man."

Recalling the more striking of recent attempts to give the satisfaction demanded, there is first one, which calls itself Christian Pantheism. It boldly challenges science to do its worst. Appealing to that predisposition of humanity, to believe in a cause which is more permanent than any existing or known effects, to find abiding power under changeful

appearances, it conceives of this abiding power as an eternal life, of which all things are but the phenomena. This life is an unutterable unity,—the sense of all that is. Advancing a step, it claims as the offspring of this unutterable unity, not only all natural, but all mental and spiritual phenomena ; the yearning after the good no less than the susceptibility to the beautiful. It finds the moral impulse for the individual in the thought, "I am not my own,—I am wanted or I should not be here, for all things serve aught else—my life's work is to play my part, according as the divine forces without and within me teach, not for myself, but for the widest good I can conceive."

The hand here is the hand of an Englishman, but the voice is the voice of a Greek. We are carried back to the porticoes of Athens, where immensities and unutterable unities were household words, before they inspired the utterances of to-day. But whether Pantheism be English or Hellenic, its source is in that one sense of the soul, *the sense of beauty*, which can pierce through the rift of a glowing sunset splendour to the abiding power beyond, but which shrinks from the touch of pain, as out of harmony with perfect beauty, and turns away in loathing and despair from the courts of the city, where "the poor are hovelled and hustled together, each sex, like swine."

To a man educated and cultured, with a body free from pain and care, a man satisfied with dilettantism,

revelling in sensuous pleasure, — to such an one, Pantheism,—to call it Christian Pantheism, is an anomaly,—may answer all questions, for he can say with truth,

I built my soul a lordly pleasure house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell,
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

But, and if through that soul, in time and in the course of the eternal love, there should flash "the riddle of the painful earth," down must she come from her palace towers, "so lightly, beautifully built." She must face something more than yearnings after the good and susceptibility to the beautiful: aye, even deeds of loathsome crime, ugliness and deformity within her and around. Will it satisfy her then, to say, "Play your part according to the divine forces without and within you?" What and if

"She howls aloud, 'I am on fire within.'
There comes no murmur of reply.
'What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die.'"

What if the soul, getting its answer from this philosophy, turns round on it with a bitter curse and says—"You tell me to play my part, as the divine forces without me and within me teach. Without, are your relentless forces, from which the weak and helpless get no mercy: I must perish, if there is no pity, no tenderness. The forces within, can they be divine? I know of but one such force,—the force of heart-

brokenness, of self-contempt, and it is from this that I asked to be saved." So-called Christian Pantheism has this reply, and this only, "Believe in an unutterable unity," in "the sense of all that is." As well and perhaps better had "Christian Pantheism" remained written in Athenian Greek, than offered to toiling, sorrowing men in the nineteenth century the guidance of the sense of beauty, as their one interpreter with the Eternal; as their refuge against the attacks of Atheism; as the key to the enigmas of life, the source of victorious strength over the sin that chokes them.

A second reply to the question of mankind is of a very different character to the foregoing. Catching inspiration from the Roman tongue, it yields itself up to that sense of the soul which is occupied *with system and order*. Right-doing, the appeasing of conscience, becomes the object of deification, and to the soul thirsting for the draught eternal, is offered a power not ourselves, making for good conduct. Mr Arnold reminds one of a sailor who, hardly hoping that he can get his ship through the shoals, throws overboard everything possible. Calvinistic theology goes with an evident relish—the miraculous element in religion is sacrificed without a single misgiving, as "a fairy tale,"—the cherished belief of a million others in the kingdom of God is parodied in a vulgar way, by the high priest of culture, who spices his revelation with all the sallies of a brilliant humour, against two un-

fortunate bishops, who once ventured to call the God of the universe "a person."

Mr Arnold deals with God and the Bible as if they were the object of an ejectment suit by "the masses." Rising with the self-satisfied air of a criminal advocate, and a professional side-glance at the jury, he proceeds to the defence of the accused. In the course of his argument he does a great deal more than defend his clients, for he supplies an answer to the question of humanity—he hands to all men a cup, at which they are to slake their thirst after the Eternal. He completes for us the revelation of God. Man is athirst for God, even for the living God, and Mr Arnold reveals that God is a power not ourselves, of which

Six eighths has to do with Conduct,

One eighth has to do with Art,

One eighth has to do with Science,

all that we know more about it being, that three quarters of it are "displeased and dissevered" with bad conduct generally, and one eighth is offended with the singing of "doggrel hymns."

Such is the object, offered by a second school of thought, to the restless craving of humanity, which, wearied of its own emptiness, asks to be filled. The answer is, Do the right thing—obey conscience. "The best you know" is enough for you. Nothing but emotion is needed to transform "The best you know" into a religion which will suffice for all your wants. Realise that there is a power outside of you, not

yourselves, which is on the side of good conduct, and every soul "athirst for the living God," must find itself at the fountain of the water of life.

No one can refuse thanks to Mr Arnold for his emphatic testimony in favour of righteousness, for his exaltation of the law of conscience; and the simplicity of his creed—Do the best you know—will have a charm for practical men. It is not, however, a universal gospel. It may meet a want among civilised communities of Europe, because "The best they know" or at any rate the best they *may* know, is the very best possible, but preached before the king of Dahomey, it will give fresh sanction to conduct, which, loyal to the best it knows, counts the blood of its victims as the worthiest offering which it can make to the Dread Unknown. In truth, Mr Arnold's revelation is not a gospel at all, at least, if by that word is meant the good news which meets the aspirations and cravings of humanity. For it has ever been those among men who have most faithfully followed after the best they knew, who have aspired and craved for more. It is the righteous man who has been most oppressed with his own unworthiness, the perfect man who has exclaimed, my sins are more than the hairs of my head. If it be so with mankind at his best, what use to hold out to him such a miserable burlesque of a gospel? He who accepts it may become the modern Pharisee of culture and sneer at the passer-by, as one less perfect than him-

self; but good news is wanted by the whole family of man,—men are searching after God, if haply they may find him, and Mr Arnold tells them he is only emotional conduct, writ in capitals. Mankind is seeking after a lost ideal, and the best they know is offered them in the place of it. It is useless. Every altar, which has been raised on the face of the fair earth; every sacrifice which through the ages has been offered to the unseen, condemns this new nostrum for the wants of humanity. The best known never has satisfied, and never can do. Right conduct has its blessing for man, in his every-day relationships with the seen and temporal, but because its guide is *the best it knows*, it fails to carry man upward as far as he can go, or to give scope for the workings of that higher nature within him, which is restless until it has communion with its ideal. Man puts before him but one ideal—*The better than the best he can conceive*. That is his idea of God, however varied the terms in which it be conveyed. Communion with that ideal he seeks for, as for life itself, *he must have it, or die*.

Yet still, "O God, thy creature crieth unto thee." The words are as true now as when Egypt heard them in prehistoric times. The creature crieth for light, for help, for communion, and a third answer is being offered it, characteristic of these days. It is physical science which claims to satisfy the unrest of man, and the object which it offers him is the exclusive

property of another of the senses of the soul, *the sense of the majesty of order*. "There is neither Angel nor Spirit," say our scientific Sadducees.* 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' "Certainly," they reply, "we will shew you God through the microscope, or if our present instruments are not fine enough for the purpose, they soon will be. In the vibration of indivisible molecules is the cause of all phenomena. What more can you want?"

The question is a fair one, and if mankind ask for nothing more than molecules, it may be granted that material science is to supply all our wants. If what men have called God be the vibration of molecules, then they are themselves God, and need waste no time in searching after themselves.

The Sadducees have had such great triumphs of late, they have made so many wonderful discoveries, they have done so much to increase our comfort, that it is no wonder if their heads are a little turned. Their everyday utterance is the one so significant of the youth of Lord Beaconsfield's last hero, "I shall never change my opinions."

The ability and attractiveness of these hoydens of thought is undeniable, and it were unreasonable to blame them for their youth. For only one hour in the world's history has science been studied scientifically, that is, with the aid of carefully recorded observations

* This title is used in no offensive sense, but as one which, having regard to its origin and history, is fairly applicable.

and instruments capable of checking them. The geological theories of fifty years ago were exploded within our own lifetime, and it would seem as if the new theory to which we have become accustomed as the unmistakeably true one, might need revision in the light of recent astronomical research. The greatest scientific mind of the day is avowedly but *guessing*, and speaks in common with other leaders, with a modesty unknown to the disciples, who forget that they are not above their masters. It need not therefore create alarm, though it must raise a smile, to be told by scientific young ladies and gentlemen, that it has been reserved for them to crown the capitol of human knowledge and to abolish God with the microscope.

Yet many good people are becoming afraid of science and have a half-acknowledged dread that it may prove equal to its boast, and destroy their God, of whom some of them have been taught to think as the very reverse of one without variableness or shadow of turning. Forgetting that "he is not a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent," they picture to themselves one who may be turned by the selfish cry of a man, from his great purposes of good toward humanity, and when these persons learn the seeming fixity of physical law, when they are forced to admit the unvarying regularity with which the powers of nature go on relentlessly, their faith in what they call Providence is

shaken. Others have looked at creation as the manifestation of arbitrary and capricious power ; it has been an article of their faith that the world as now seen was suddenly turned into space, as a live bird flies out of the shell, in the hands of a conjuror. Science not only laughs at their cherished ideas, but even hints that they themselves are the descendants of the brutes ! It is a false rendering that, of Darwinism, but it suits certain theological teachers to present in that light a theory which, if established, will account for the ever *ascent* of created beings. With both the classes of persons referred to, it will probably happen, that their faith in immortality has root in an unquestioning acceptance of the Bible, as a verbally inspired book. So, when they see critics, whom even they are bound to hold orthodox, giving up the theory ; when for the first time, suspicion is forced upon them, that there are discrepancies and irreconcilable differences in the Gospel narratives,—false readings and unwarrantable additions from one end of their authority to the other, their faith is shocked. When the scientific hoyden, with none too much feeling, bids them contemplate a death-bed ; impresses on them the failing powers of mind, no less than of body ; proves how every particle of that body which they had fancied about to enjoy itself in Elysian fields, is, as matter of fact, going to build up a new vegetable kingdom—“simple believers” are not merely shocked, but staggered.

It is obvious that physical science can have no reply to the questions which the differing families of man are one in asking, if only for this reason,—that it appeals to nothing, nay, rejects everything, except experience. For that great factor in human consciousness, that “something finer than experience,” it has no place. In common with the Gospel according to Mr Arnold, it will recognise “the best it knows;” of *the better than the best conceivable*, it will be the first to admit that it knows nothing, nay, when represented by Professor Clifford, it sets itself in exact contradiction to the universal consciousness, making it ground of complaint that the object of worship should “transcend all ideals.” In fact, it destroys the object of worship, and offers as a substitute *the study of the collective self*. So that, when (to adopt the words of Professor Tyndall) “the Pilgrim pining for his distant home,” asks of it the way thither, it views him with a look of half-pity, half-contempt, and turns back again to its facts and demonstrations, telling him that though the contemplation of that distant home may be to him “a source of refined and elevated pleasure,” it is a pleasure in which he has no right to indulge.

Just because it does so, it must be helpless, not only to satisfy the cravings of man, but to destroy those cravings, and the veriest orthodoxy need not fear that the religion of man, the tie which binds him to the Unseen, can be even touched by material science.

Man asks of the present and the past,—what am I and whence? Science answers as Democritus did—Atoms. Bid it tell you the cause of phenomena and it answers you by setting forth antecedent phenomena, concealing ignorance by the invention of new terms; matter, energy, force or anything else; ask of it regarding the future, and the answer which failed to satisfy men thousands of years ago, is repeated by one of its ablest and most brilliant exponents. Prof. Tyndall's anticipation of the time, "when you and I like streaks of morning cloud, shall have melted into the infinite azure of the past," recalls to us voices, which one of old time rebuked. "We are born at all adventure and we shall be hereafter, as though we had never been; for the breath in our nostrils is as smoke and a little spark in the moving of our heart, which being extinguished, our body shall be turned into ashes and our spirits shall vanish as the soft air, and our name shall be forgotten in time and no man shall have our works in remembrance, and our life shall pass away as the trace of a cloud and shall be dispersed as a mist that is driven away with the beams of the sun." *

Is it wronging the new philosophy, if we have forebodings that its disciples, when the guiding hand of the master is gone, may put in practice their creed, even as did those in old time?

"Come on therefore, let us enjoy the good things

* Wisdom of Solomon, c. 2.

that are present and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth ; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments and let no flower of the spring pass us by ; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds, before they be withered. Let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness. Let us have tokens of our joyfulness in every place ; for this is our portion and our lot is this. Let us oppress the poor righteous man, let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the ancient grey hairs of the aged ; let our strength be the law of justice, for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth." *

The sense of the majesty of order, which has given so great a stimulus to the study of physical science, has been expressing itself in other forms ; indeed it is characteristic of our day, to be swayed more by this one sense of the soul than by any other. It is the spring of such utterances as those of the author of "Supernatural Religion," who after disposing to his own satisfaction, of all that is involved in the popular term supernatural, appropriates a series of soothing assumptions, with regard to the present and the future, for which there is no warrant, save in the revelation which he has destroyed.†

Slavery to this sense of the majesty of order, is

* Wisdom of Solomon, c. 2.

† "Under the beneficent Government of an omnipresent God—we know that all that is consistent with wise omnipotent law is prospered and brought to perfection, and all that is opposed to divine order is mercifully frustrated and brought to naught."—"Sup. Rel." Vol. II., p. 492.

shown too in the writing of one of true heart, who sees now "with other larger eyes than ours," the truths which enthrallment to that one sense made him fail of learning here. The answer which Lord Amberley gave to the cry of humanity, cannot be called a gospel ; it was the panacea of hopelessness, of despair. To the soul thirsting for communion with the Eternal, he says, "Many there are to whom this final hope is an enduring consolation, but if even that should fail us in the hour of darkness, if emotion is reluctantly compelled to yield to reason ; there is still one refuge in despondency, and a refuge of which we can never be deprived. It is the thought that death so cruel now, will one day visit us with a kinder touch, and that the tomb, which already holds the nearest and dearest within its grasp, will open to receive us also in our turn to its everlasting peace." Even the apostle of so simple a creed as despondency, must assume "an everlasting peace : " and if his voice could now but reach those who, through fear of death, have been all their lifetime subject to bondage ; who, dwelling on his last words, may urge "Ay, but in that sleep of death, what dreams may come!" it might tell of a peace which passeth understanding, not in the grave, but beyond it ; a peace assured to all who are true to the light they have, to all who having been faithful in a few things, shall be made rulers over many things and enter into the joy of their Lord.

The books thus briefly noticed have been reviewed

by writers representing almost every school of religious thought, and they are to be received gratefully, not merely because they bear witness to the still unquenched thirst of men for the living God, but because they shew an honesty of purpose, a determination to follow after truth, lead it whithersoever it may. They are quoted here, because as new answers to the old questions, they shew that our philosophers have failed and must fail to satisfy the spiritual craving of mankind, so long as they give themselves up to the guidance of one only sense of the soul, be it either the sense of beauty, of righteousness, or of order. For consideration will make it plain, that neither one nor the other of these separately, nor even the three in concert, can ever be the sure guide of man, in his ceaseless search after the Eternal. In a religion which is to satisfy, which is to fill man, there is room, nay, there is necessity, for the exercise of all these senses, but a faith which rests upon one alone of them, will be open to attack from another, and a faith which rests upon the three, will lack the inspiration, the life, to be gained only from a fourth.

These three senses are occupied with the seen and temporal, it is *the religious sense* alone which grasps the unseen and eternal. Call it by what name you please—"the religious instinct," "the internal sense," or "the religious sentiment in the nature of man," you find philosopher, sceptic, and leaders of natural science, admitting its existence and power. It seems

akin in things spiritual, to the tactual sense, the parent of material senses. It not only reaches out after the unseen and eternal, but it becomes the channel through which the unseen and eternal is brought within the apprehension of the soul. To use the language of modern science, we go back through the accumulated experience of the race, till we reach the creature and the medium in which it lives, the organism and its environment, the ego and him in whom it lives and moves and has its being. We may adopt as a first principle, that between these two factors there is incessant interaction, and affirm that spiritual life is a perpetual connection and interaction between the soul and *the better than the best it can conceive*. Whatever be the faculty which apprehends that connection, and which the accumulated experience of the race shews to be a universally possessed faculty, we call the religious sense of the soul; and as science tells of steady and uniform progression in the past, and adopts the glowing inference of a progress in the future, boundless and without end, so the spirit of man has grasped a like idea, through this religious sense, and contemplates that higher life, when the perpetual connection between the soul and *the better than the best it can conceive*, shall have become harmonious and therefore perfect.

This being accepted as in some sort a correct description of the religious sense, it is clear that religion is very ill defined as conduct plus emotion. It is

rather, that predisposition of Humanity, which prescribes conduct. If it were the former, we might have to admit the absurdity recently suggested, that the tiger chasing and devouring its prey, may be a religious being, but religion has proved, not only the guide, *but the elevator, the controller* of conduct; it has united the family, founded and kept together the nation. Its articulate voice, worship, is in the beginning, an instinctive thirst after the unseen and eternal; in the end, a perfected communion between the Eternal and the worshipper. Hence the religious sense of the soul cannot be satisfied with this life; it may embrace a world and not be satisfied. Still it crieth out for God, even for the living God. It is not out of harmony with those other senses of the soul, the senses of beauty, of righteousness, of order, but unlike them, it will not rest in things temporal, but soars its way heavenward, as on eagle's wings, claiming its inheritance in fellowship with the Divine.

- If the soul exist on this wise—with an aspiration, a tendency, a predisposition, a religious sense—call it what you will, it is but Sisyphus' toil, to try to satisfy it with an exhibition of God through the microscope,
- or to urge it to throw itself into the arms of the Immensities, or to claim its reverence for a power not itself, divided into eighths. The Eternal Powers may meet the wants of the sense of order—the scientific sense; the Majesty of Nature may sustain the artistic sense—the sense of beauty; the Relentless Veracities

may suffice for the sense of right, of conscience, but they will fail utterly to touch the religious sense, because it refuses (no matter that all the Sadducees, Philosophers and men of culture, expostulate with it on its want of sweet reasonableness) to be satisfied with the impersonal. It insists on a *conscious object for its reverence and love*. In accord with the soul's other senses—of beauty, righteousness and order,—it is yet more farseeing than they, and has perceived what they have not; that they, no less than itself, exist as the influences of One in whom all beauty, righteousness and order, as well as *love*, are centred. If that One be conceived of as *a person*, it is only because human language cannot express its divine ideal—*the better than the best it can conceive*. From the whole family of man comes the simple utterance, (call it childish if you please and not therefore to be met with a sneer,) to the object of its aspiration and worship,—

Thou seemest human and divine ;
The highest, holiest manhood thou ;
Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Or as the Persian poet has it, "Human knowledge and thought combined, can spell but the first letter of the alphabet of Thy love."

With the senses of beauty and righteousness and order, man is seen passing over this small track of his existence—time. These senses guide him, and in their turn are guided by experience. The religious sense

also offers him guidance; she is cautious in trusting mere experience, for she finds it open to the risks of false premises, false conclusions and false testimony, but she is influenced by something ultra experiential, something "far finer than experience." She comes not to one man, but to the whole family: in no age, among no nation, is she a stranger, but speaking every tongue, at home in palace as in hovel, is with each "pilgrim pining for his distant home." The sand is heavy, as he toils along toward it and the sun is hot; she leads him, not by the slow way of observation and recorded experience, but as by the unerring sight of a bird, to the fountain of the water of life. He is weary, and despairing; he lays him down to die, and she puts new life and hope into him, whispering,—“thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty, they shall behold the land which is very far off.”

Now, as provision has been made for the fulfilling of the senses which are concerned with things seen and temporal, there is *a priori* ground for believing, that somewhere there must exist *that better than the best conceivable*, for the sense, which after all that earth can put before it, still thirsts for the water of life, still hungers for a bread which is not of earth, still pines after a distant home, still longs for communion with the eternal object of its worship. The other senses find objects which can bring them rest, objects with which they can commune and be still,—and is the religious sense alone to be doomed to bend her

head for ever toward the stream and find it vanish, as her lips touch it? The objects which satisfy the senses of beauty, of righteousness and of order, are present to them. The exquisite forms of nature and the thousand shapes in which art seeks to draw inspiration therefrom, the wondrous arrangement, by which men gather that "through the ages, one eternal purpose runs,"—these things can be learnt and understood and delighted in, more and more, by the senses which give themselves up to a study of them, but the object which is to fill the religious sense, is unseen, unknown, and unless therefore she is to hunger and thirst even to the death, the object of her aspiration *must reveal itself to her*. Without a revelation, she is lost, so witnesses the universal consciousness of mankind, and the consciousness is a pledge (unless eternal righteousness be a delusion and a lie) that a revelation shall be given. What is to be said then, when the anonymous author of an unknown religion ventures the assertion, that "the argument so often employed by theologians, that divine revelation is necessary for man, is purely imaginary, the necessity of divine revelation is a pure figment utterly opposed to reason?" * If so rash an assumption, so wild a statement, serve no other purpose, it may help us to remember that among sceptics, no less than among theologians, mere assertion often stands in place of argument, and that with both, the

* "Supernatural Religion," pp. 491, 492.

term reason is diverted from its primary meaning, to be made a synonym for individual opinion.

Bishop Butler says, "to say a revelation is a thing superfluous, which there was no need of, is, I think, to talk wildly and at random," and Dr Newman defines a revelation to be "a direct message from God to man, and bearing itself, in some degree, a miraculous character." His definition will meet us again,—meantime we must be prepared for a somewhat contemptuous answer from the Sadducees. "Your religious sense of the soul turns out to be only another name for the affections; and we can shew you what they are: they are nothing more than the development of the primary animal instinct—love of self."

Upon this philosophical hypothesis,—that the love and worship of One not self, above self, *the better than the best conceivable*, is the gradual and necessary development of the primary instinct, the love of self, we should expect to find, in deference to recent scientific guesses, that after the existence of man for many thousands of years, the lower type had been, if not eradicated, at least very nearly superseded by the higher, and that the only ground for attributing to man the possession of the lower form, would be certain extant traces of it, such as in the physical frame suggest to Mr Darwin the various stages through which our present form has been reached.

Facts do not suit the theory. The existence of occasional lower types of existence in the physical

world is admittedly a difficulty in the development theory, but how much more does the objection exist in the case we are considering ; for to-day the love of self is as strong and vigorous and universal, as when it is first met with, and now (as at the first whisper of man's articulate voice, worship), this religious sense thirsting for communion with the better than self, is *in antagonism with* the love of self. The history of man is the history of individual experience. In prehistoric Egypt, no less than in the England of the nineteenth century, it is the history of a struggle between good and evil, between the animal instincts and the "religious sentiment in the nature of man." The worship of *One better than the best we can conceive*, is an eternal protest against the love of self. The mere daily struggle of life tells us, that between self-seeking and self-surrender, there can never be peace, or even armed neutrality.

Nor will another ingenious theory serve, which assumes that the religious sense is a thing hit upon in dreams, a fable by which mankind have sought to explain to themselves and each other, certain phenomena of their existence. For we find this religious sense, not to be what Mr Arnold fancies it, conduct plus emotion, but the inspirer, the guide, and the elevator of conduct, whereas in dreams there is a suspension of the power of forming judgment upon conduct.

Again, it will be objected that the religious sense is a conception, which is at best emotional in its character, and that emotions are in their very nature

vague and cannot be made intelligible to those who have not felt them. To this class of objectors, the answer may be fairly made, "physician, heal thyself," for what is their denial of the religious sense but an emotional process? all that they can say being, that they individually have not become conscious of its existence: and to say that, even if when saying it, they are not deceiving themselves, is but like a blind man affirming that none in the world can see. A universal consciousness must override an individual one, and if one man insist that he is in the right and all the world is in the wrong, the epithet applied to him will not be complimentary.

Neither philosopher nor Sadducee seems able to account for the religious sense. How did it come into being? and how having come into existence, did it continue and extend itself into a universal consciousness, deluding itself into the worship of an objective reality, which was in truth nothing more than a subjective illusion? If the existence of the religious sense involve primeval communion between the soul and *the better than the best it can conceive*, then it becomes intelligible that it should awaken a ceaseless craving for a renewal of that communion. If "trailing clouds of glory do we come, from God, who is our home," it is no wonder if we yearn after that distant home. If there be a basis for the Hebrew fable, that in the beginning God walked with man in the cool of the day, is it marvel, if amid the glare and

dust and turmoil of life, man should long for the shade of the garden again and the sound of the well known voice ?

But the religious sense is more than a mere thirst for communion with the Eternal ; it is the channel through which the revelation of the Eternal is made to the soul,—by means of which the object of the soul's worship, *that better than the best conceivable*, is apprehended,—the medium for an assurance, that though *apprehension* can never become *comprehension* of the object of worship, any more than one room can contain the light of the sun, yet that the soul may become filled with its glowing ideal and the light grow brighter unto the perfect day.

Max Müller has shown how in prehistoric times, before the great families of man had separated, the "Heaven Father" was the object of a common worship. Associated by Aryan and Turanian, with the sky, or heaven—"the Shining One," and by Semitic with "the Highest One," the idea of personality, which Mr Arnold who, attaching to that word *his own arbitrary signification*, charges as so gross a crime against the bishops, was predominant ; and it is worthy of note, that it is among the races who have given to the world the three great religions, Jewish, Christian and Mahomedan, (all equally resting on *the oneness of the better than the best conceivable*), that the idea of personality is strongest. Regarding the Christian and Mahomedan religions, there can be no doubt ;

nor would there be as to the Jewish, but for Mr Arnold's assertions, which shew his consciousness of superiority to the writings of the old Testament. For if there be a conception, without which those writings are hopelessly unintelligible, it is that of "God in history," an ever present personal king, friend and father. Substitute for that Mr Arnold's power not ourselves, divided into eighths, and you may go hand in hand with culture, but you must part company with common sense.

To illustrate this by one instance only, from the Hebrew,—take the story of Jacob. Fleeing from home, lest his meanness and deceit should be visited upon him, he takes to himself this assurance, from "the Lord God of Abraham his father and the God of Isaac"—that he shall spread abroad to the east and to the west, and that in him shall all nations be blessed. He awakes out of his sleep and (observe with no other idea of God, than as a power making for good conduct) exclaims, "this is none other than the gate of heaven!" Again, with this power, he makes the bargain, that if he gets bread to eat and raiment to put on, until he comes safely home again, *then* the God of his fathers shall be his God. Note, too, the beautiful story which accounts for his change of name.—He is on his way, to meet a brother whom he has wronged. He has divided his company into three bands and sent them over the brook before him *in hopes of appeasing his brother with a present.* He

is alone with God in the starlight night. Then he prays—"O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, which said, return unto thy country and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shewed unto thy servant, for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now behold I am become three bands. Deliver me I pray thee from the hand of Esau, for I fear him that he will come and smite the mother with the children and *thou hast said*, 'I will surely do thee good and make thy seed as the sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude.'"

Here was the crisis of the man's life. It was no contention, no strain *to stand upright* as Mr Arnold fancifully supposes ;—what did sustain Jacob and give him power as a prince, was a childlike trust in Him, who had given his promise "*for Abraham's sake.*" With no notions about powers making for good conduct, on the contrary, with a keen sense of his own meanness, he can yet, with a proud humility, appeal to his Father's God, to be true to his word. This which we are thus interpreting, is poetry, it will be urged, and Aryan stupidity will be blamed, for incapacity to understand Semitic genius. Strictly speaking it is not poetry. Hebrew poetry supplies a hundred instances for this one—but supposing it be so, poetry does not *make* the ideas of a people, it *evidences* them and all such language as this

would have been unintelligible to the Hebrew masses, had it not been the expression of their own faith in a personal king, friend and father of the nation. True, their ideas of the Divine personality had nothing scientific about them, nothing metaphysical. No one had then conceived of a term—hyperhypostasis, over which to wrangle. The harassing contradictions of Athanasian creeds and Calvinistic definitions, had not then been invented. Israel's ideas of God were summed up, as we have found them summed up, in days long before the call of Abraham, in the names, the Highest One, the Heaven Father. It was thus that Israel, in common with the rest of mankind, was taught by the religious sense of the soul, to call upon *One better than the best they could conceive.*

It does pass comprehension, when with the history of the past before us, we find a great teacher like Professor Clifford, asking, "in what way does belief in God strengthen my sense of duty?" For from the days of Israel to these present, the idea of the personality of God has been the incentive among the nations, who have had the making of the world's history. It came, a resistless power behind the Ottoman scimitar, when it struck at the corrupt heart of Europe; it was the key-note of the battle song of Gustavus Adolphus,

"Amen, Lord Jesus, grant our prayer;
Great Captain, now thine arm make bare,
Fight for us once again."

It edged the sword of the Ironsides, as Cromwell

hurled them against his priest-led Presbyterian foe, at Dunbar, with the triumphant shout "Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered!" In our day, it has helped to weld into one the scattered fragments of a fatherland—and to this hour, thank God, it is alive in Englishmen. Popular theology has too often caricatured the idea of God, as a righteous and loving King, Friend and Father of the people; it has too often ignored the senses of the soul, which perceive beauty and order, for it has offered a Juggernaut for God and put arbitrary caprice in the place of a loving will. Because it has done these things it must fall, but it will not be supplanted by either Neobuddhism, or Emotional Conduct. Every plant which our Heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up; the tide is coming in and the children's castles will be swept away. As they vanish one by one, humanity will be driven in its maturer years, as in infancy, to thirst and cry out for the living God. As before, so now, the religious sense will answer, by revealing the Fatherhood of God, and if it should be, that among men there is found One, whose life proves to be *the objective revelation* of the same truth, that One will be recognised as he who alone can satisfy the craving of humanity—"shew us the Father and it sufficeth us."

It has been affirmed that the religious sense was in harmony with the senses of beauty, righteousness and order. Proof of it is found in the way in which she takes the objects of their solicitude, and uses them as

means by which the revelation of *One better than the best conceivable* can be made intelligible to man. She has to guide to his distant home a pilgrim who is ever tempted to be absorbed in his earthly relationships, to whom animal instincts are perpetually suggesting the love of self, as the natural adviser of life. With a wisdom that cometh from above, the religious sense makes man's earthly surroundings the sacraments of divine grace. His brightest and best associations, inspired by her, become foreshadowings of an Eternal One, that createth beauty, that loveth righteousness, that worketh all things in a perfect order—our Heaven Father.

That the revelation thus made to man, of the supreme glory of the Fatherhood of God, is a true revelation, can be demonstrated in the daily course of life, as Lowell sings :—

“ I had a little daughter,
And she was given to me,
To lead me gently backward,
To the heavenly Father's knee ;
That I by the force of Nature,
Might in some dim-wise divine
The depth of His infinite patience,
To this wayward soul of mine.”

Nothing short of deliberate determination can prevent a man from getting glimpses of God's revelation from communion with his children. As he sees their eyes brighten at his coming, becomes conscious that he is not merely the object of their reverence, but

of their love, the sharer of their joys and sorrows, in short, their confidant, the authority to which are referred their doubts and difficulties ; the sense through which he aspires after communion with the Heaven Father, will point to Him the goal, far off it may be, but *in the same track*, along which his children are unwittingly beckoning him—the path of unquestioning, loving confidence. While the other senses of the soul make him conscious that perfect beauty, supreme righteousness, eternal order, must belong to *the One better than the best conceivable*, this fourth sense is the revealer of that One, under the name of Father ; not that the word expresses the fulness of the ideal, but he catches it from his little ones who first lisp it, without knowing what it means, save that to them it signifies this, if nothing else,—communion with one who is their joy and peace and rest. The perfect reliance which children place in their parents, and the rest which comes from out their trust, will almost force men to strive after fellowship with the Heaven Father, on the same footing as their children have fellowship with them. They who neglect the living instruction of their children, who find them a trouble, who see them once and again, whose profession, or business or pleasure, usurp the moments which are the children's by right, who would think it childish to join in their games, to whose ears their ringing laughter is a noise instead of music, are failing to learn in some sort the depth of God's infinite patience

with themselves, are neglecting one of the truest sacraments of their salvation, are shutting their eyes to the glory of the eternal God, as it is reflected in the glory of earthly fatherhood.

Father,—that universally revealed name of God, the name which is above every name, will be found a standing rebuke to low grovelling ideas. It must banish the non-natural capricious conceptions, the heathenism of popular theology, for pleading this name, man looks up to the unseen and says, "Has Thy empire, O Lord, gained in splendour by my obedience? And my sins, have they diminished Thy immensity? And if because I have done ill, Thou should'st do ill to me, what were the difference between Thee and me?" The power of this name will annihilate the philosophy of nescience, for those on whose foreheads it is written, can see beyond the changing appearances of time, and exclaim, "Thou, O Father, art He that maketh, Thou art the good that worketh, the good that doeth all things;" "Thou art the true one, the word true denotes Thy form;" "Thou art the Father of all truth." The name, Father, restrains the boasting of physical science, which is forced to confess, that, "though it see beyond all limit, to the roof of the universe, it can behold one tile of His dwelling, one tile, no more." *

When the night overshadowed Abraham (so the

* *Vedas.*

Koran tells us), he beheld a star. This, said he, is my Lord; but when it set, he said, I love not gods that set. And when he beheld the moon uprising, this, said he, is my Lord, but when it set, he said, surely if my Lord guide me not, I shall be of them that go astray; and when he beheld the sun uprise, he said, this is my Lord, this is the greatest, but the sun too went down. And Abraham said, O my people, I turn my face to the Father of the heaven and the earth.

So it will be to the end. "Our little systems have their day; they have their day and cease to be;" popular theology is falling before our eyes, for Augustinism can never take the place of a Divine revelation,—the enthusiasm of humanity, or admiration of the collective self, cannot satisfy the determination of man to be victorious over self—physical science admits its helplessness to satisfy "the religious sentiment in the nature of man."

In returning to the primeval revelation, there is rest and salvation. A revelation, not locked up as a mystery, in the charge of priests, but to be apprehended by each one of us, in the sacred circle of home, in the round of every day duties. Is it too simple a thing? "My father," said Naaman's servant, "if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?" Simplicity is worth the trial; take a little child for your teacher; accept your earthly fatherhood as your interpreter

with *One better than the best you can conceive*, and in so doing, you will be witnessing to the universality of the Divine revelation. And as Tyndall says, out of experience there always grows something finer than experience. If "the kingdom of science cometh not by observation and experiment alone, but is completed by fixing the roots of observation and experiment, in a region inaccessible to both and in dealing with which we are forced to fall back on the picturing powers of the mind," how much truer is this, of the search after *the better than the best conceivable*? Faithful to the experience of our own highest relationships, accepting the simple teaching of earthly fatherhood, we shall sooner or later be brought into the presence of a glory, where beauty, righteousness and order are no longer separated lines in the spiritual spectrum, but are blended in one dazzling light. It is as veriest children, that we shall look up thereto. Apprehending, yet never comprehending, wondering, stretching out after it, worshipping it, we shall still (guided by the religious sense, through which came the primeval revelation to all men), raise up our hands towards it and say, "Our Father, which art in heaven."

Fatherhood — behold then, its supreme glory! Among the divinest sacraments of earth, it takes of the things of God, and shews them unto us. Channel of most glorious grace, by which there may descend into our souls some knowledge of the Eternal

beauty, righteousness and order, after whom we yearn. Yet only a sacrament, no more'; only our best attempt to express the inexpressible ; only, our lovingest name for *One better than the best we can conceive* ; only the rough picture which we children draw, of Him whom our soul loveth—but yet, the road by which we may journey from the seen to the invisible, and though with bleeding feet, come after long wanderings to the Fatherland.

THE GOSPEL OF SONSHIP.

IT has been seen that through the glory of fatherhood, the religious sense had apprehended a universal revelation of God to man. Through realisation of that glory, man gained his best conception of the *One better than the best he could conceive*. His brightest relations with his children were manifestations in the seen and temporal, of the unseen and eternal ; sacraments of grace, by which, in some dim way, he might divine the depth of God's infinite patience.

The truth, that there was One better than self, above self, was for ever being opposed by the lower nature, of which the love of self was guide and ruler. Where the lower nature could not master the higher, it succeeded in perverting the conception of the *One better than the best conceivable*, into One *opposed* to man, at *variance* with him, which fact serves as answer to what is sometimes urged against the existence of a primeval Divine revelation of the Fatherhood of God, viz., that the most powerful religious motive with savages, is *fear*. Probably the statement is true, though even among savages, there is trace of more genial and friendly relationships with the unseen, as for instance, among a South African tribe,

with whom the explanation of thunder is, that "the king is playing." The inference to be drawn from the religious ideas of savages, would however seem to be in favour of a Divine revelation, rather than against it, for the fear of savages arises from a shrinking from One above them, One opposed to them, but whence the conception of opposition, save from the struggle between the animal instinct, love of self, and the religious sense, pleading the revelation of *One better than the best conceivable?* The struggle goes on to-day, as it has gone on from the beginning, between the two opposing factors in man's being—self salvation and self surrender. Every religion springs out of one of these motives or the other; worship, the voice of religion, is the expression of one of these feelings, or the other; in its lowest form, it is pitiable slavish dread, an everlasting prayer to be let free from punishment; its highest development is child-like loyalty, an unquenchable thirst for the Eternal Father, a proud humility, which demands communion with Him as its birthright. These two governing ideas of religion, these two formers of its character, are, and ever must have been, at variance with one another and could have had no common origin.

It is the distinctive glory of the Hebrew prophets, to have kept alive faith in the Divine revelation of the Fatherhood of God. Their task was no light one, for their countrymen, enslaved by Babylon, Assyria, and Rome successively, may well have been terror-

ized by brute force, which did indeed for a time, kill in them all national sense of the Divine revelation, which had made their greatness. The triumph of brute force was no less disastrous for conqueror, than conquered; self-exaltation was the cause of the material and spiritual ruin of the ruling powers of the world. The name, Heaven Father, lost its charm as its earthly sacrament was despised; the pity, tenderness and love, which are the marks of earthly fatherhood, were effaced by the mercilessness, cruelty and passion, which stamp the animal nature. Childhood, among the ancients, was no season of joy and brightness, as in our associations. The life of each little one of Roman birth, was dependent on the caprice of his father; did he refuse it notice, the son was no child of the house, but was doomed to death or slavery.

The religious sense was fully avenged (if one may so say) for the neglect of its revelation, by men thus closing to themselves the simplest road towards the One better than the best conceivable,—communion with their children. But though the easiest way of answering the questions about the unseen was forgotten, the questions themselves never ceased. In the schools of Greece, the difficulties of modern philosophers were puzzles; in various systems, our new foes meet us in their old garb. The immensities and unutterable unities; forces, substrata, powers not ourselves (not yet divided into eighths), Dr Strauss's

latest discovery, the universum, our new worship of the collective self—all wander like a restless crowd, and repeat the ceaseless sigh, "Our heart is disquieted within us, until it resteth on Thee."

Amid the doubts and difficulties of the old world, we first hear the recorded words of Jesus,—“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil; be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect; be ye merciful as your Father is merciful; pray to your Father in secret and your Father knoweth what ye have need of before ye ask him. Forgive men their trespasses and your heavenly Father will forgive you; take no anxious thought about your life, for your Father in heaven feedeth even the fowls of the air; if ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give you His spirit. Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Here is no new revelation, but a new proclamation of the old one, which we have heard from the beginning—the supreme glory of the Fatherhood of God, and here is a new appeal to the sacrament of earthly fatherhood. Moreover, there is a great deal more than a proclamation. For the life of Jesus was *the*

manifestation of what mere precept never can make real to mankind. From the moment when to his parents who sought him, he said "wist ye not, that I must needs be in my Father's house," to the last words of his perfected life, "Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit," the story of Jesus is the objective revelation of the old truth of the Fatherhood of God.

But the revelation had been set forth for ages ; prophets had come and gone in one place and another, with the words telling of God's Fatherhood on their lips, and their voices had been drowned in the cries prompted by men's animal instincts. It was to brute force, not to fatherly pity and gentleness, that the weary world was bowing down, and unless brute force were to be enthroned in the earth, unless the race were to be enslaved by their animal instinct, was there now *a necessity* for a revelation, for a direct message from God to man. The road to the Eternal One had been forgotten ; no amount of material prosperity, or literary and artistic culture, had succeeded in teaching men the way unto the Great Father of gods and men, which a little child could have shewn them. In Corinth, the light of Greece, as it is called by Cicero, there was a philosophical school at the corner of every street, while in the temple of Venus, a thousand prostitutes served as priestesses before the goddess. If a revelation were to be given which would satisfy and fill men, it must be the old revelation, for that was truth itself ; but a manifestation was needed, of the

only way by which men could make the glory of the revelation their own, by which it could enter into them and satisfy their yearnings. Even so was it with the revelation of Jesus. *Sonship, the child-like relation*—is its keynote and its all. The revelation comes to us through a little child, for there is no other way, as we shall see, through which it can come, and to this present (we may prove the truth of it), in the hands of little children, are the keys of the kingdom of God.

The life of Jesus is unintelligible, if we have to do with immensities, substrata, or powers divided into eighths, but in view of the personal relationship revealed through the religious sense, in view of man's loss of that revelation by his own disloyalty to it, and in view of the sadness and sorrow of men, missing they knew not what, seeking they knew not what, the life of Jesus proves itself to be the great objective revelation of the Fatherhood of God, the only answer to the yearnings of Humanity. That yearning was for God, even the living God, for communion with Him, rest in Him. Jesus met it by manifesting a new and living way to the Father—*perfected, ideal sonship*. In the filial relationship, in childlike trust and simple loving obedience, lay the way, the only and eternal way. The glory of sonship shines in the first thought of Jesus, "I must be in my Father's house;" it is perfected in his last words, "Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Filial union with the Heaven Father was

the source as well as *the object* of his life and raised it from the human into the Divine.

As the manifestation of ideal sonship, the way unto the Father, Jesus of necessity becomes *the Saviour of the world*. Men were crying to be saved, not from the pains of hell, but from that direst hell, solitude with self ; men were miserable, because separated from the Father, because in darkness whereas their native element was light. The life of Jesus spoke to them thus—"let your life be mine, give yourselves up unreservedly to the guidance of God's revelation, let the ideal sonship be yours by simple trust and loving righteous obedience and you shall know the Father. The kingdom of God, His diviné rule and government, are not outside you, but within you." The teaching of Jesus was not do this or that, but *follow me*; it was as sons, and only as sons, that men could have reunion with the Father ; all their trouble had arisen from their separation from Him, in returning to Him was rest and salvation.

As the truth of the primeval subjective revelation may be proved by every man, through the earthly sacrament of fatherhood, so the objective revelation by Jesus may be brought to the test of experience, wherever the relations between parent and child are what they ought to be. No paradox will then be found in the words "my Father is greater than I" and "I and my Father are one." On the contrary, such sayings will be the simple expression of a union real,

because spiritual, foreshadowing the eternal oneness to be hereafter perfected, between us children and our Father in heaven. The truth to nature, the simplicity of this new and living way opened up by Jesus to the Father, has given offence to the churches. To deny the truth was hopeless, because the religious sense was found confirming it, but to conceal it was easy, by making sonship dependent on magical rites, or individual consciousness. *The gospel of Jesus* fell into the hands of Ecclesiastics, who doled out in place of it *a theology* in which access to the Father lay, not through ideal sonship, but priestly ministrations, and in which a meaningless thing, called "imputed righteousness," took the place of conformity of self to the life of Jesus.

While sacramental systems and vicarious schemes are aiding metaphysical subtleties to keep the children of God asunder, Jesus stands pleading the Divine revelation. To let that revelation take hold of us and satisfy the craving of our souls, the ideal sonship must be ours. Personal devotion to it, entire conformity to it, will make us one with him, who has manifested its perfect beauty and disclosed it, as the new and living way unto the Father. Personal loyalty to Jesus was the moving power of the men who followed him at the first, and no other power can draw us in his steps. The revealer to us of a power not ourselves divided into eighths, naturally finds fault with attempts to rekindle that flame of love for

Jesus, which has marked the highest spiritual natures ; but though it is quite true that the enthusiasm of passionate natures in the glow of a first devotion, cannot be kept up and should not be worked up by excitement, it is true only because enthusiasm is meant to be *the impetus* of spiritual life. The flower drops off that the fruit may follow and mature. The author of "Supernatural Religion" tells us, that "the imitation of Christ has become almost the final word in the preaching of his religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence." The "imitation of Christ" is but another name for the glory of sonship, which alone can be the rest of the soul here and its perfecting in the bliss of the hereafter—union, childlike union, with *the One better than the best we can conceive*. It remains for us to try anew the imitation of Christ ; not seeking a fancied share in the benefits of his death, but claiming salvation by his life. Keeping before us the manifestation of the ideal sonship, once for all set forth before humanity ; realizing it each one in his own life ; making it our own—we shall find the way unto the Father. And He who proved himself the ideal and perfect son, in the shop at Nazareth, by the wayside, in the garden of agony and on the hill at Calvary, will give us yet greater proof of who He is, as growing into His likeness there will at last dawn even over our self-darkened souls, some faint realization of the

Divine in the human—the union of God and man—the oneness of the Father and the Son.

To the claims of Jesus as here stated, two objections will be taken, both of them by persons who may be ready to go so far as to accept Him as an instance of perfected humanity; one class may say,—“we do not quarrel with your view of this perfect humanity, but why limit it to the person of Jesus? Is perfection impossible, save in him? May we not suppose that there have been other souls as pure, other lives as self-sacrificing, which have been, equally with his, the revelation of God? Is it worthy of a Divine revelation to be thus limited?”

The objection affords opportunity for asserting once again, that the revelation is a *universal one*; unlimited by time, age, or place. The consciousness of *One better than the best conceivable* seems never to have deserted man; if it ever should do so, religion will cease to exist. When, for *One better than the best conceivable*, man substitutes *the best he knows*, his aspirations must need be short lived and the seen and temporal will satisfy his every craving. Jesus, as the objective revelation of the Father, laid claim to the same universality as had marked the subjective revelation. He was the light of the world; he was to draw all men unto him. His claim to universality is therefore a stamp of truth. It was a thing foreign to the teachers of the great religions of the world. An influence over all men, a kingdom established in

the hearts of all men, are conceptions of Jesus, and none other, and are in harmony with the universal consciousness. And yet another conception is his and only his, viz., that the glory of the revelation was to belong *to every brother and sister of his*; his own ideal was the ideal which he set before each one of us—"be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." His it was to manifest that perfection, attained through unimpaired communion with the ideal; ours it is to pant and strive after it. In ever faithful souls, does the brightness of his glory grow; even here, they are a faint image of him, the light of the world; yet a little while and they shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is. The glory that excelleth, shall be their ever drawing nearer and yet nearer to that eternal uncreate ideal, of whom Jesus was the earthly manifestation. The knowledge, that in their human nature there has been that manifestation, becomes to them a source of strength and hope, but for themselves, the nearer they grow into that likeness, the more are they conscious of their distance from it. For them, there is the everlasting joy, *unfulfilled aspiration*, because the ideal of Jesus was *One better than the best they can conceive*. Filled with their ideal, yet never containing Him, they shall awake up after His likeness and be satisfied with it. To deny the existence of purified souls, were to disregard the words of Jesus; many there are on earth, who are to us as stars in a night of weary waiting for the morn; many more there must be, in the

world beyond the seen, whose light, like that of some of the far off suns, has not yet reached us, and thinking of them, we can with a deeper meaning use the poet's words, as he gazed on the fair creation,

“O God, O good beyond compare,
If thus, thy meaner works are fair;
How glorious must those mansions be,
Where thy redeemed shall dwell with thee.”

But we see not any other than Jesus, who is the perfected manifestation of the way unto the Father. Search from the greatest of ancient religious teachers to the last,—they give, some of them, an almost perfect system of ethics, but it was not for a perfect system that the spirit of humanity was craving. A new and living way unto the Father was what was hungered and thirsted for, and from Zoroaster to Comte, there has been but One who has offered himself to man, claiming to be the bread which came down from heaven and the water, of which if a man drinketh he shall never thirst.

The complete answer to the difficulty we are considering, is given us by Jesus himself, “none has *full knowledge of* (ἐπιγινώσκει) the Father, save the Son.” No one but the perfect Son can know perfectly the Father. To be conscious of the Father is the birthright of us all, as sons of God; it is just because we are sons, that the spirit within us teaches us to call upon the Eternal as our Father; an ever-growing knowledge of Him

is the hope of the present and the hereafter ; but a perfected knowledge, as will be seen presently, it can never be ours to possess. The unimpaired consciousness which Jesus had, and His unswerving loyalty to the consciousness, is the answer to the high priest's question, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

A second objection to the view of Jesus as the revelation of the Father and the Saviour therefore of the world, is, that it is preposterous to suppose that the Eternal could have given such a marked exhibition of His interest in so small a speck of His creation as this planet, and that the Christian revelation assumes that a like exhibition must be made in the other million worlds sparkling around us ; in other words, that Jesus must spend an eternity in manifesting Himself, first in one world, then in another. The objection is so vague a one and supposes so much, that suppositions may be fairly put against it. As to the nature of these worlds outside us, we are in the dark ; as our knowledge grows, it tends to shew that the physical conditions under which they exist, are such, as for the present at any rate, to forbid the development of life like our own. But were it proved that every planet were inhabited with conscious intelligences, it would not follow that these had lost that universal consciousness of the Eternal One, which made the objective revelation a necessity for us. The objection may present a difficulty to the

popular religion, which teaches that through one man's disobedience, the whole race fell under the wrath of God and needed God to assume their form, to save them from everlasting torture, but it has no force in the light of Christ's teaching, as distinguished from much that is called Christianity. The manifestation of God's love, not the Saviour from God's wrath—the revealer of the Father, not the substitute for the sinner—He came (so common sense is at one with revelation in telling us) to those who needed God's love, to those who were seeking for a Father whom they had lost. Saviour, because the restorer of a communion which was the life of man; priest, because offering up the most precious thing, which had been keeping man apart from God, self-will, self-pleasing, his coming to us was answer to all suspicion of littleness, or meanness, of our world, or of our nature. For us, it is mere random speculation, to talk of his being needed for other worlds; *for this world he was needed*; so affirms the voice of humanity.

The foregoing objections are useful, if they help us to remember how dangerous a thing it is for men to seek to add to the revelation of God. Jesus did not depreciate, but exalt, the universal subjective revelation of the Fatherhood of God. We do the very opposite, when we draw out our schemes to account for the salvation of men from hell, before the coming of Jesus, or fail to recognise the working of the spirit

of the Father, among those who have never heard the name of the ideal Son. "The net of heaven is very wide in its meshes," said the Chinese sage, "yet it misses nothing." Do not then let us fancy that we are wanted to put patches in it.

II.

An objection to the acceptance of Jesus as the revelation of the Father, coming from a different school to the above, must be now considered. It may be said,—“Christianity is an historical thing, miraculous and supernatural. It must stand or fall, by an acceptance, or rejection, of the gospel narratives. You are seeking to substitute for these an inner light of the soul. Such a light may, or may not exist; we do not concern ourselves with that question. It may satisfy the soul which supposes itself to possess it, but it can never be an argument with the masses, in favour of a divine revelation.” It must be answered, that no such substitution as is alleged has been attempted. Appeal has been made, *not to an individual experience, but to a universal consciousness*, a necessary consciousness and therefore a true one. It is only the school of extreme idealists, who can hold that this universal consciousness is a subjective illusion, and for all practical purposes the man who says that the consciousness is unknown to him, proves no more than that he is different from all other men. The aspirations of the past, are

the hopes of the present, and nothing changing, or impersonal, has satisfied them. The guesses of philosophers, the facts of science, the inventions of theologians, fail to touch "the immovable basis of the religious sentiment in the nature of man," and it might have been said of the Egypt of the Pharaohs as it is said of the England of to-day by Professor Tyndall, that "to yield this sentiment reasonable satisfaction, is the problem of problems at the present hour."

But further, the objection does not affect us who are not defending Christianity (if by that is meant popular theology), but who are bent upon finding reasonable satisfaction for the religious sentiment in the nature of man. Assent to, or dissent from the miraculous must be given, no doubt, but as will be seen in a moment, the question becomes a very different one according to the position which it occupies, in the consideration of a Divine revelation. Recalling the position arrived at, it has been found, that the religious sense in mankind had sought to give the reasonable satisfaction asked for by disclosing through the glory of earthly fatherhood, the supreme glory of *One better than the best conceivable*. That, just as mankind were true to the light which was in them, as they were loyal to the revelation, or perverted it by following the guidance of the animal instinct, their approach to the Eternal was marked by childlike love, or slavish fear, and that, when forgetting the holy

sacrament of earthly fatherhood, they abandoned themselves to the senses of the soul, which could be filled with the seen and temporal, the light which was in them became darkness. But "the night was darkest before the dawn;" at a moment when the revelation seemed lost save to a few faithful souls, and yet when a feverish longing for some manifestation of the Divine marked the civilised world, the voice of Jesus was heard in the fields of Galilee, not offering some new panacea for the woes of humanity, but pleading afresh the supreme glory of the Fatherhood of God, claiming to be the means, by which access was to be had to that glory; the ideal and perfect son manifesting childlike trust and loyalty to the Father. It was not only his appeal to, but his perfect harmony with, the subjective revelation which made good his claim to be the objective revelation, the way unto the Father; a way, of which the truth might be found by every man for himself, in steady unwavering devotion to the ideal sonship, by realizing it in his individual life, through simple trust and free loving obedience. Thereby, was to be gained that communion with the Father, *which was Christ's conception of salvation*, a union which was to be both the boundless satiety of man's soul, and its never ending source of aspiration.

This being so, external testimony, whether historical or miraculous, becomes of secondary importance. The facts of the life and death of Christ may be considered

as placed beyond the reach of criticism, the mythic theory being hopeless, spite of its brilliant advocacy ; and now critics, with little in common save derision of the supernatural, are agreed in accepting the character of Jesus as a reality and the teaching of Jesus as the highest attainable. Renan tells us, that "whatever may be the transformation of dogmas, Jesus will ever be the creator of the pure spirit of religion ; the sermon on the Mount will never be surpassed . . . in order to make himself adored, he must have been adorable . . . Jesus remains an inexhaustible principle of moral regeneration for humanity. . . . Jesus will not be surpassed, his worship will constantly renew its youth." Another writer says, "The system of Jesus was final in this respect amongst others, that superseding codes of law and elaborate rules of life, it confined itself to two fundamental principles,—love to God and love to man. While all previous systems had merely sought to purify the stream, it demanded the purification of the fountain. It placed the evil thought on a par with the evil action. Such morality based upon the intelligent and earnest acceptance of divine law and perfect recognition of the brotherhood of man, is the highest conceivable by humanity, and although its power and influence must augment with the increase of intelligence, it is itself beyond development." *

* "Supernatural Religion," vol. ii. p. 488.

Even Lord Amberley, who was so afraid of any exaggeration of reverence for Jesus, felt constrained to "pay him the high and unquestioned honour which his unflinching devotion to duty, his gentle regard for the weak and the suffering, his uncorrupted purity of mind and his self-sacrificing love, so abundantly deserve."*

A greater thinker than any of the above, adds his testimony thus :—

"Whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; *a unique figure*, not more unlike his precursors than all his followers. . . . Who among his disciples or among their proselytes was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the gospel? . . . It would not be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live, that Christ would approve our life."†

To those who agree in the view so well expressed by the above writers, discrepancies in the gospels and false readings in the Bible text cannot cause concern; much less can they do so with us who accept Jesus as the objective revelation of God, because of his complete agreement with the subjective revelation of the Fatherhood of the Eternal One, and who seek

* "Analysis of Religious Belief," vol. i. p. 496.

† J. S. Mill, "Three Essays on Religion."

proof of the truth of his objective revelation in their own home relationships. The question of the miraculous or supernatural element, remains however to be dealt with.

The difficulties surrounding it are lessened, when it is remembered that what science is pleased to call the "invariable laws of nature," are nothing more than "comprehensive expressions of aggregates of particular facts;" in other words, they are the scientific records of observations. So that when the author of "Supernatural Religion," in combating the view that miracles may be referred to some law of nature, of which at present we are ignorant, says, "a law of nature, in the scientific sense, cannot exist without a class of facts which come under it," he states nothing more than the very obvious fact, that records of phenomena cannot be made unless the phenomena really occur. It is clear that until physical science can assure us that its record of phenomena is complete, it stultifies itself by denying the possibility of phenomena which may not as yet have come within the scope of its observations. Further, it must be borne in mind, that physical phenomena are but the expression of method,—method adopted by an entity, which materialists call force or energy, but which, unless it be devoid of purpose and the universe be therefore a fortuitous concourse of atoms, must be expressed by the term *mind*. In considering phenomena, therefore, we must deal with the cause, no less than with its expression, with the

subjective, no less than with the objective. So that it will be unscientific to talk of the impossibility of the miraculous, until we have a finished record of mental, no less than of physical processes. Meantime, psychology, aided by physiology, is doing much to shew the correlation between nerve force and mind force, and that the one, by means of the other, is brought into relation with the physical forces witnessed by us. But at every step, something at present inscrutable crosses the path, something which comes under no law, *i.e.*, no scientific record of phenomena, *viz.*, the will of man, which can not only guide and control physical phenomena, but for the time, can interfere with them, as when a stone is thrown into the air. Nor is this met by the author of "Supernatural Religion" saying, that "this merely tends to prove that every effect must have a cause, a proposition too hackneyed to require any argument at all. If a man had not thrown the stone, the stone would have remained lying on the ground; no one doubts this." It is not likely that anyone does, but for all that, this temporary interference with the law of gravitation, is the manifestation of a power, of the working of which we know nothing, and regarding which it has as yet proved impossible to get a series of scientific observations, such as in the physical sphere are named laws. Moreover, in the case of the above interference with the law of gravitation, the observer is in a position to say that the interference is momentary, *only*

because he can watch the process to the end. Were his power of observation to fail, at the moment when the stone was on its upward way, he would record a law not of *gravitation*, but of *levitation*. While then, within ourselves, we find an inscrutable power, which seems akin to the cause of all, like in kind, though limited in extent, and while physical science can as yet offer us no more than a limited record of observation, made during one small fragment of infinite duration, it is not for our Sadducees to talk about the impossibility of the miraculous. One of the youngest and therefore the most dogmatic of them, asserts that "it is even a doubtful policy to assert, that science is incapable of anything,"* so that his reading of the words of Jesus, would run; "with God, it is impossible, but not with men, for with men all things are possible."

A sufficient rebuke to this teaching is given by Prof. Huxley, in his "Lay Sermons." "What is this dire necessity and iron law, under which man groans; truly most gratuitously invented by him? I suppose, if there be an 'iron' law, it is that of gravitation; and if there be a physical necessity, it is that a stone unsupported must fall to the ground. But what is all we really know and can know about the latter phenomena? Simply, that in all human experience, stones have fallen to the ground, under these conditions; that we have not the smallest reason for believing, that any

* Mr George H. Darwin, *Contemporary Review*, Nov. 1874.

stone so circumstanced will not fall to the ground ; and that we have, on the contrary, every reason to believe that it will fall. It is very convenient to indicate that all the conditions of belief have been fulfilled in this case, by calling the statement, that unsupported stones will fall to the ground, 'a law of nature.' But when, as commonly happens, we change *will*, into *shall*, *must*, we introduce an idea of necessity, which most assuredly does not lie in the observed facts and has no warrant, that I can discover, elsewhere."

But, granted the possibility of the miraculous, or in other words, granted our inability to make correct and complete records of all physical and mental phenomena, a more important and practical question follows, viz., how far are miracles necessary to establish a Divine revelation, and how are we to regard the accounts which are given of them in the Jewish and Christian scriptures ?

Not many years since, the answer of orthodoxy would have been, that those events were the credentials of Jesus, that his divine claims must be conceded, *because of his miracles*. The bulwark of faith during a time of much spiritual earnestness, but little intellectual development, was a miraculously inspired book, recording a series of miraculous events. But the tone of Apologists has undergone a change. One of them writes, "though we no longer prominently urge the miracles of Christ, as the proof of our religion, yet, on the other hand, we cannot

regard them as stumbling-blocks in the path of an historical belief." *

"In considering the miracles of Jesus, we stand in a wholly different position to the earlier disciples ; to them, the evidence of the miracles lent an overwhelming force to the teachings of the Lord, they were as the seal of God to the proclamation of the new kingdom. But to us, who for nineteen centuries have been children of that kingdom, such evidence is needless. To the apostles, they were the credentials of Christ's mission ; to us, they are but fresh revelations of His will. To us, they are works rather than signs—revelations, rather than portents. Their historical importance lies for us in the fact that without them it would be impossible to account for the origin and spread of Christianity. We appeal to them, not to prove the truth of Christianity, but to illustrate its dissemination." †

The *Church Quarterly Review* of April 1876, has the following on the same subject : "We deny in fact, that a miracle, abstractedly considered and apart from certain connections, has any evidential value beyond itself. It proves itself and nothing more. What was wanted, to prove the truth of our Lord's words, was not miracles as such, but miracles of a particular kind. *In a word, not miracles at all, but certain plain facts, such as would correspond to, and bear out his pretensions.*"

* Farrar's "Life of Christ," *preface*, p. 13.

† *Idem*, p. 6.

The admissions of the foregoing writers, which logically require supplementing,* will not affect the few dogmatists of science, or nescience, who rest themselves, on their "unwarrantable must," and deny the possibility of anything miraculous, or outside the recorded observation of mankind; but to mankind, in the aggregate, passing by the exceptional cases, the views above expressed are important and helpful. To all who are satisfied that through the religious sense, there has been a universal revelation of God, in the glory of Fatherhood, and through the ideal sonship of Jesus, an objective revelation of the same truth, it will be a very different thing, whether approach to a study of the miraculous be made through historical and critical enquiry, difficult and sometimes, as in the case of the fourth gospel, to say the least, inconclusive; or whether, in the light of their accepted revelation, their "direct message from God," as Dr Newman calls it, "bearing in itself something of a miraculous character," the question becomes narrowed as to whether certain books, admittedly human compilations, and open therefore to criticism, however keen, provided only, *it be fair and sympathetic*, are an honest attempt to describe and sometimes to explain, the history of Jesus. For if he be accepted as the revelation of God, the greatest manifestation of the Father, it will not be incredible or even strange, to find this

* Dr Abbott's "Through Nature to Christ," which I did not see till these pages were in the press, marks a notable advance on the apologists quoted.

manifestation accompanied by unusual proofs of the Father's love and care for men, and by unusual marks of the power which belongs to ideal sonship, in virtue of its oneness with the Father. The most beautiful things in the world, says Renan, "are done in a state of fever; every great creation involves a breach of equilibrium, a violent state of the being which draws it forth." The same truth is expressed by Tennyson,

"For all the past of time reveals,
A bridal dawn of thunder peals
Whenever thought hath wedded fact."

In the completed and objective revelation of God—the Life of Jesus, such a union was celebrated. The Divine thought, working from the beginning in humanity, was at last, face to face with a Divine manifestation. To man, thirsting after the Eternal One, Jesus cried and said, "No man fully knoweth the Father, save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son is minded to reveal Him." To man, wearied and worn out, Jesus called, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." To man, half doubting of the voice within him, Jesus gave the assurance, "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you." To man, asking the marks of true sonship, the one eternal test was given, "Whosoever shall have done the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother." In the kingdom of the world, brute force had become identified with greatness, but the Revealer taught "Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is the

greater in the kingdom of heaven." The thought of an incarnation—God in man—was now for the first time wedded to the fact of a life manifesting that incarnation to all men; itself the realization of the now conscious, now unconscious longings of the race. The Father's love was manifested—the way unto Him, was set forth—the truth concerning Him was made plain—the life eternal with Him, was disclosed to all, in the bonds of an eternal perfected sonship. Is it any wonder, if this "new creation" involved a breach of equilibrium?

But while maintaining that position, we must none the less readily admit, that the age in which Jesus "went about doing good," was an age of credulity, when everything that could not be accounted for, was at once accepted as miraculous. It would be easy to collect from the Gospels abundant testimony to the apologetic tone which Jesus himself assumed toward the miraculous in its popular sense; to the curative power which he recognised as possessed by others beside himself; and to the actual failure of miracle (in the common sense of the word), to carry proof of a Divine mission, either to the crowd or to those more carefully instructed. The appeal of Jesus was to a life of perfect obedience to the Father; to ideal sonship, rather than to marvellous works; if men would not be moved by that, well, there were deeds of mercy and of love which might move them; but it was a sinless life, not the power over the demons

in men, which was to give them communion with the Father. Blessed were they, who saw Jesus, "by the Spirit of God," cast out the demons, but blessed rather were they, who heard the Word of God and did it. True, Jesus at one time did appeal to his good works, but it was when grieved at the hardness of men's hearts. He had offered them union with the Father by likeness to himself; he was setting forth before them, that ideal sonship which was the way unto the Father, but their eyes were holden that they could not see, and Jesus turning sorrowfully to them, said—"if you will not recognise sonship as the new and living way unto your Father, see and confess, at any rate, that the fruits of sonship are works of Divine mercy and love."

It may be said, "admitting the possibility, nay the reasonableness of the miraculous, accompanying the completion of the Divine revelation, which in itself bears something of a miraculous character, why adopt an apologetic tone at all about the recorded miracles of Jesus?" His own words give the answer—"Bind not heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, on men's shoulders, while ye will not lift one of them with your finger; shut not up the kingdom of heaven before men."

Is not this what many of our religious teachers are doing, in their mistaken and hopeless conflict with science? Are they not preaching, as if there were now the same ignorance of physical phenomena,

which made the Jewish people in the time of Jesus determined to attribute to miracle, events which Jesus himself disclaimed as miraculous? Miracles have been allowed to become synonymous with caprice, with fitful interference with the "laws of nature;" and such things being unknown to physical science, so long as the Divine revelation is supposed to rest upon no other basis than caprice, a growing scepticism among thinking men is inevitable. But since research in mental physiology has shown a curative power greater than any medical science can supply,—the power of faith and profound devoted expectancy—why should orthodoxy anathematise those who recognise this power rather than a capricious interference with the laws of nature, in the bulk of the recorded miracles of Jesus, his great works of healing? And when he is found opposed to the performance of what was wonderful merely as a sign, but curing all manner of diseases among the people, when he perceived *that they had faith to be healed*, we may surely, without putting limits on Divine power, without any lowering of the character and mission of Jesus, regard the greater number of his mighty works, not as fitful suspensions of the laws of nature, but as manifestations of that intelligent causation which we regard as the spring of all outward phenomena, having this above all things as their aim, to prove that this causation was love and goodness and pity, no less than wisdom.

The crowning wonder of the life of Jesus,—his

appearance after death, stands alone and calls for special comment. To those who, notwithstanding the heathenish abominations with which fashion does its best to mar the effect of the service of our national church, are yet able to raise the song of triumphant praise for those who have been delivered from the burden of the flesh, the teaching of science, that this visible body returns to the earth as it was, should be neither new nor startling; "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." The body committed to the grave, we hold to be the natural body; the body which shall be known hereafter, we believe to be the spiritual body. And so we leave our loved ones joyously, in sure and certain hope that the fashion of their body of humiliation shall be changed according to the fashion of his glorious body, whom faithful souls were permitted to see even while on earth and who shall be seen—so stands our hope—of his brethren, eye to eye, when the short night of earth has faded into the everlasting dawn.

The conception of a resuscitation of a physical body,* needs the support of the verbal inspiration theory and the elimination of reverent but enlightened criticism, and carried, as it must be, from the person of Jesus to ourselves, is an impossible conception. But it may be dismissed on another and safer

* It is this conception, which the author of "Supernatural Religion" combats in the concluding volume of his book.

ground. It is inadequate to satisfy the religious sense in mankind, and if the argument hitherto followed be a sound one, is consequently unworthy of a Divine revelation. The religious sense avows itself unfilled with the material ; it demands a spiritual communion, *with the One better than the best it can conceive* : it claims a higher than physical life, as its birthright. To the followers of Mahomed, the prize of a resuscitated body had its charms ; to a soul that thirsteth for the living God and that can stay itself on the thought, "when I awake up after His likeness, I shall be satisfied with it," such an offer is useless.

The manifestation of Jesus after death to his disciples, can only be explained away, when subsequent history is ignored. That a handful of unlearned and ignorant Jews who had wondered what rising from the dead should mean, were found almost immediately after their Teacher's death and at the moment of the shattering of their hopes, pledging their all before kings and rulers on the fact of their Lord's appearance to them, requires mere credulity, unless we assume them to have had assurance of the fact—to them so unexpected—by a manifestation which was irresistible. Anything more unlooked for than the reappearance of Jesus by his discouraged followers, it would be hard to imagine ; for the view of the author of "Supernatural Religion,"* that the disciples had been prepared by Jesus to

* See Vol. iii., Part 3.

expect his reappearance, is most completely falsified by their conduct at the time of his death. The assumption, that in his last days the great Teacher may "have applied to himself the description of the suffering servant of Jehovah," and so led a few unlettered men to discuss among themselves after his death, the problem "if he was the Messiah, what will now happen?"* until subjective impressions had been formed, admittedly foreign to their minds, and at last these subjective impressions had become represented, with "objective consistency," demands a credulity positively orthodox, in its degree. It may safely be said, that these supposed impressions were foreign to the disciples, for as our anonymous author remarks with truth, a belief in a resurrection was part of the creed of those Pharisees who had been always held up to the disciples by Jesus, as the type of all that was to be avoided. That Christianity may be said to have been for the time extinguished by the death of Jesus, is admitted by Lord Amberley. He says, "it has been widely believed, that because Christianity was not put down by the death of its founder, because indeed, it burst out again in renewed vigour, therefore the measures taken against him were a complete failure and served only to confer additional glory and power on the religion he had taught. . . . Christianity which, if our accounts be true, threatened to seduce large numbers of people from their allegiance to the

* *Idem.*, p. 547.

orthodox creed, was *practically extinguished* among the Jews themselves, by the death of Jesus."* If this statement be a fair one (and there is no reason for disputing it, if it mean that the discomfiture of the apostles was complete at the death of Jesus), the greater becomes the demand on our credulity, if we are to believe that within a few years, not only were converts to the new teacher to be reckoned by thousands among the Gentiles, but that the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly, and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith; a faith, not wrapped up in creeds and enunciated by councils, but a faith which was loyalty to Jesus Christ, to the proclamation of Divine eternal sonship, as the only name which had been given among men, whereby they must be saved. Nor does the later spread of faith in Jesus bear less strong testimony to his reported manifestation than does its first and immediate success. The author of "Supernatural Religion" takes it as a sign of weakness, that in eighteen hundred years, Christianity only numbers 340 million of followers, against 660 million of other creeds, not thinking it necessary to add, that the area over which Christianity extends, is equal to that occupied by all the others; and that those who have lived in lands of the old religions, do not doubt that Christianity, like a wedge, is splitting them in sunder. Brahminism has not yet accepted the

* "Analysis of Religious Belief," vol. i. p. 418.

brotherhood of Jesus, but its late and grosser forms are being shamed out of sight and the greatest Hindoo minds are searching for the light. Shame on us, if we have bewildered them by half-representations of the truth; if our missionaries have taken them creeds of man's devising, rather than the proclamation of the glorious, simple gospel, of the Father and the Son.

The success of Christianity cannot be attributed merely to its ethics; for these were not new. Jesus appealed to the old revelation, made aforetime through the religious sense in mankind, a revelation not only inspiring conduct but becoming its guide. "If thine enemy hunger," said Jesus, "feed him." "If a man does me wrong," was the teaching of Sakyamuni, "I will return him the protection of my love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me." "Love your enemies and bless them which persecute you," was the first and last word of the ideal son; "Let every thorn which people sow in thy path, bloom in the lustre of thy smile," is the maxim of the Persian poet. How comes it, that while the voice of Jesus is sounding throughout the earth, the voices of those, who aforetime were among the greatest prophets born of women, whisper fainter and ever fainter? How comes it, that within hearing of the one, the deaf hear, the blind see, and the dead are raised, and that the others fall unheeded and half intel-

ligible on ears that are heavy and will not hear ? Does Mr Arnold's " method and secret " of Jesus, supply an explanation, or is the fact accounted for by the patronising concession of the author of " Supernatural Religion," that Jesus presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, noble and consistent with his own lofty principles ?

There is an explanation, more simple, intelligible and reasonable, and one which therefore bears the marks of truth. The past success of the faith of Jesus is owing to, and its future triumph is assured by, his being the *completion of the Divine revelation*. Distorted by the inventions of men ; clouded by metaphysicians and theology makers ; misrepresented by professed preachers ; the good news has gone forth conquering and to conquer, because it is no mere message, no system of ethics, but an opening up of the way to that object of universal longing—*One better than the best conceivable* ; the Heaven Father. Not the death but the life of Jesus, is the power of Christianity ; a life, not limited to one short day on earth, of going about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by demons ; but an everlasting, spiritual life, spurning the trammels of the grave and manifested to faithful souls as the glorious first-fruits of the oneness with the Father, attainable by the whole family of man, along the path of perfected sonship. Faith in Jesus, loyalty to him, has but one voice though many languages, and

as they swell in worship from sea to sea and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth, they bear witness to the power of the resurrection; not to the resuscitation of a mortal body, but to the manifestation of a quickening spirit.

There are really only three explanations of the crowning glory of Jesus which call for judgment from us. First—there is orthodoxy, which keeping to the letter, accepts a material body as the fruit of the resurrection, and can stay itself on the thought of enjoyment, rest and peace for that body, in the hereafter. Secondly—we have anti-supernatural religion, laboriously working out a theory, that the crucifixion was followed by a conference of the disciples on certain supposed last words of the Teacher, but of which last words no trace has reached us; that this conference, after a presumed study of the prophets, came to a decision that something more than shame and death *was necessary* for the Messiah; and that a sense of this necessity sustaining some one individual more excitable than the others, into a real and honest, but complete delusion, that he had seen the risen Christ, this delusion was quickly shared by a considerable number of persons and ultimately grew into the faith of Christendom. As an alternative, there is reasonable satisfaction for those who accept in its simplicity a Divine revelation; a “direct message from God to man, bearing in itself something of a miraculous character.” For

the revelation, from the very nature of it, can only be apprehended by *the religious sense*, which has been found in the past, just as much as in the present, to claim and thirst for communion with a spiritual objective existence outside of it. How the one is apprehended of the other we know not, but it seems to us children, as if we put our hand out through the darkness and felt a Father's arm! Would it be unreasonable, if to this spiritual sense, even while hampered with the animal nature, there should at one time or another be made manifest, an objective spiritual existence? Would it be ill-timed if the moment of the manifestation were at the completion of the Divine revelation, in proof, that perfected victorious sonship was an eternal thing, untouched by the destruction of the animal body? Is that unreasonable, to a world which has shewn itself panting for an unbroken spiritual union with *One better than the best conceivable*, and which can for itself test the truth of Jesus,—that perfected sonship is the new and living way to that union?

Well might S. Paul say, that if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, and that if in this life only we have faith in him, we are of all men to be most pitied; for in such case, we have aspirations, the purpose of which is, to make life a battle-ground where humiliation and defeat are frequent and ultimate failure certain, our Divine ideal being to us no more than a subjective illusion, with which we can never

have perfected communion. Can "the enthusiasm of humanity" be sufficient stay to the soul that thirsteth for the living God? Is the doing a little to make a few of our brethren wiser in sanitary matters, or more comfortable, an experience, which can take the place of a spiritual thirst after perfection and communion with it? No; if the religious perception be a true thing and the result of the action and interaction of the organism and its environment, of communion between us and our Father which art in heaven, then we may fairly and reasonably stand by the Hindoo thesis;—"God unjust, or man immortal." Then to those of us, who, accepting the universal subjective revelation of the Fatherhood of God, see in the perfect life of Jesus the objective manifestation of the same fact; who follow in the new way opened up by him unto the Father, it will not be unreasonable to find, that this way is a living and not a dead way; that its fullest and highest manifestation is spiritual life, rather than material death.

It may be granted to anti-supernatural religion, that the truth of the last manifestation of Jesus is not proved by the fact of its having been believed for eighteen centuries by millions of mankind, but we are placed in no dilemma by his question, "Must we then understand that the dogmas of all religions which have been established must have been objective truths? and that this is a necessary inference from their wide adoption? If so, then all

historical religions before Christianity, and after it, must take rank as substantially true. In that case, the religion of the Veda, of Buddha, of Zoroaster, of Mahomet, for instance, can be as little based on unreality and self-deception as Christianity." * Who shall be found bold enough to deny the truth of the assertion? Who that accepts in its simplicity the revelation of Jesus, will dispute that the great religions of the world are "substantially true;" that under them is the veritable substantia, the universal revelation of One above self—*One better than the best conceivable?* What but this led the great prophets of the Vedas, to declare of that mighty One, that "heaven and earth take refuge with Thee, as a child with its mother," and to urge, "Let us be sinless before Him, who is gracious even to him who has committed sin?" Their conduct of life was based upon the revelation; "O Lord of all created beings, it is in the pure heart, that Thou makest thy home." Their aspirations were toward the object of it; "may this soul of mine be one with the Spirit supremely blest, supremely wise." Buddhist is found agreeing with Brahmin, that "heaven penetrates to the depth of all hearts," and that, "when heaven would save a man, it encircles him with compassion." The Koran raises its voice to bless the God "whose is the kingdom of the heaven and of the earth and of all that is between them;" it puts the golden rule thus, "Let us be like

* "Supernatural Religion," Vol. iii. p. 565.

trees, which yield fruit, to those who stone them," and it has the message of all others, for this materialising age, "All that is with you passeth away, but that which is of God abideth." When we catch at this long distance the words of the Chinese sage, "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not to others. While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve the gods? By undivided attention to the passion nature, it is possible to become a little child; the weak may conquer the strong, and the tender may subdue the hard," or when we overhear the aspiration of some Arab Sheik, prostrate in adoration upon the glowing sand, "Where, O supreme One, are the glad tidings of union with Thee, that I may abandon all desire of life? I am a bird of holiness and fain would escape from the net of this world," are we going with our English superciliousness, to despise the Spirit that speaks through these other and more ancient faiths than our own, and say of those who live by them—they cast out devils, through Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils? That we have done so, God is witness. Our missionary platforms have been often a standing insult to the Divine revelation, so far as it is full and free and universal. What, if Hindoo or Mahomedan come among us, as we go to them, and test the faith by the lives of those professing it, rather than by the ideal of which our churches have become the misrepresentations? Only when falsehood is admitted to be a greater power than truth; when a

lie is supposed to quench the spiritual thirst of mankind, can we speak of any *religion*, as based on unreality and self-deception. Whether with one religion or another, the substance is true and the falsehood lies in the misconception and expression of it. All religions alike bear witness to the same revelation of the Divine *better than the best conceivable* and to man's yearning for oneness with Him. All religions therefore, if rightly understood, are testimony to the truth of Jesus, not evidence against him, for based as they are, on the same subjective revelation to which he appealed, they cry aloud for what he only has claimed to give—oneness with the Divine. They sought to make men live as he lived; but note the mighty difference between them and the Founder of Christianity—they *taught the truth*, he *made it manifest*; they *spoke* of a perfect life, *his was the perfect life*. There is a difference here, like in kind to what there would be between giving a child instructions in the secrets of a puzzle and revealing the secrets to him by repeatedly taking the puzzle to pieces and putting it together before his eyes.

Judged on this wise, the manifestation of Jesus to his faithful ones, is independent of vulgar ideas about miracles. Physical science is triumphantly recording its observations and classing them under the head of laws; mental physiology has begun to spell the alphabet of mind; but of the spiritual, the unseen and eternal, we can know nothing, save as we fall

back, not "on the picturing power of the mind," but on the religious sense of the soul. Through it came the revelation at the first, and to it, in these last times, does the completion of the revelation appeal,—Jesus, no less the resurrection and the life, than the new and living way opened up unto the Father.

The foregoing digression is not intended to present the argument for and against the miraculous, which to the writer is a factor that even the most advanced physical science is forced to admit, but it is an argument against all systems which have founded the Divine character and claims of Jesus on reported doings of his, rather than upon *Himself*, as the objective revelation of the Father. It is an argument against hedging in a supposed kingdom of God and shutting out from it as thieves and robbers, many who, remembering that an evil and adulterous generation sought after a sign, while the kingdom of God was within them, are (in that distant and sometimes hostile camp, to which the churches have driven them) entering into nearer communion with *One better than the best they can conceive*, than those who denounce them, entering into it, because practising (perhaps unconsciously) the spirit of ideal sonship, that charity which never faileth. Here, they are seeking the truth, with a devotion which shames our half-hearted endeavours, and hereafter, when the mists of sense have cleared away, it cannot be but they will enjoy the full fruition, of the Way and the Truth and the Life.

The defence of the supernatural must be made on ground adapted to the strategy of the assailants and with weapons taken from them. The stand behind miracles as popularly understood will fail in a generation which appeals only to experience and forgets that "something far finer." Nevertheless, to experience let it appeal! The greatest sceptical writers have been found agreeing to regard the life and teaching of Jesus, as "unique," "the highest possible" and "final." They might as well say at once, *miraculous*. Let a doubting age try the conformity of the individual life to the ideal and the result will be something veritably supernatural, it will be the realization of *the Divine in the human*.

For those to whom a reasonable religion is a necessity, physical science is doing a great work, in forcing them out of a false position and making them test the faith on which they rest. Science, as taught by its most brilliant exponents, is leading, not to a denial of God, but to a confession of God equally everywhere and in everything—to Pantheism. To this tendency the Divine revelation brings the corrective. The relationships of father and son are *individual* relationships and the final manifestation of Jesus was proof of an eternally individual relationship, between every child of earth and the Father after whom he yearns. As we pass along through this one antechamber of our Father's house, science takes us by the hand and tells us of the wondrous beauty, the endless variety of the

treasures stored therein ; but yonder a dark curtain hangs, and as we come to it, science bids us farewell. It is a curtain which separates the unseen, and eternal from the seen and temporal. Beyond it, is "the beauty of the Loved One,"—the Light of Light—*the One better than the best conceivable*—our Heaven Father. A slave dares not to lift that curtain, servile fear shrinks back from it in terror ; only the son may enter joyfully, enter into the many mansions of the Father, enter, to go no more out for ever.

III.

To those persons who are satisfied with the existing condition of Christendom, it will seem an idle and superfluous thing to plead for a return to the simplicity of Jesus. The revelation of God's fatherhood will not harmonize with the bondage into which our spiritual pastors and masters would drive us. The revelation of the ideal sonship—"the new and living way" opened up unto the Father, is subversive of the claims of magical rites, and independent of (far be it from us to say, incompatible with) ecclesiastical organisation.

Probably a vast majority of thinking people are dissatisfied with what is going on around them. Amid the hubbub of contending sects ; in sight of Christian men, with their hands on the throats of Christian brothers ; with the National Church curling the lip at Nonconformists, while Nonconformists in ill-

concealed envy of its social status, shriek "down with it, down with it to the ground;" with Ultramontanism undismayed by reverses, biding patiently its time, snatching at its converts here and there in the darkness, it is no wonder if doubt be felt, whether this clanging discord, this leopard-like subtlety, be indeed a realization of the ideal sonship, or of the oneness with the Father manifested by him whose words are ringing across the bloody battle-fields of the churches—"by *this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another." "Love one another," because brethren and sisters of him, who came with the word, Father, on his lips; "Love one another," because children of the one eternal loving Father.

Before this gospel of Father and Son, which needs preaching now, as much as when Jesus proclaimed it by the wayside, the superstructure raised by schoolmen on his simple revelation will crumble away, the clouds that have obscured the meaning of that revelation will vanish. If that be so, it is of all things important, to ascertain how the revelation is being set forth to those who are to come after us. Are the little ones of the kingdom being dealt with truthfully? Are we arming them with a power, which, when we are gone, will enable them to suspend the wars of the Churches by the truce of God?

In dealing with the question of religious instruction for the young, the first thing that strikes one, is the absence of any new text book for the purpose. The

want is the more noticeable, because the books written for children are now almost numberless, perhaps, even excessive attention being given to their preparation. Each day brings forth some new candidate for favour, but among the many volumes, none successfully compete with the old habitués of the Nursery Library.*

It is in these therefore, that we must look for the views that are becoming familiar to the rising generation, and certainly no complaint can be made as to the comprehensiveness of their teaching, the structure of the body and the day of judgment being explained in our theological manuals. A distinctive feature of the literature in view, is, that it treats the last quarter of a century as a blank in thought, it ignores the great triumphs of discovery in physical science, it is silent on the immeasurable value of recent biblical research. Everything else has been moving on, but this theology is where it was thirty years ago; "thus far shalt thou come" seems to have been said to it, "but no farther." While geology has sprung into a science worthily so called, we still teach in the nursery, that God "had been six days in making the world, and when He had finished it, He made no more things."†

While deep and reverent research in natural science

* The works of one of the "Standard Authors" are said to have had a sale of nearly 750,000 copies.

† "Peep of Day," 271st thousand, revised and corrected.

is tending to illustrate the consistency and harmony of all God's dealings, in a gradual development of his creation, the beauty thereof is still summed up to children thus—

“When God made your body, He put your soul inside. Are you glad of that? When God made the dogs He put no soul like yours inside their bodies.”*

“God said He would make a woman to be a friend to man, so God made Adam fall fast asleep. God took a piece of flesh out of his side and made it into a woman.”†

But it is not only such matters as creation which are dealt with. In the book already quoted, the preface to which cautions a mother against confusing her child's mind with “complicated details,” the nature of the Godhead is thus set forth—

“The Father and the Son are God, they always lived together and they love each other exceedingly. The Father and the Son are one God and they made the world.”‡

Now without being careful to classify this particular heresy, the confusion which it and similar explanations of inexplicable dogmas create in the mind of the young, is witnessed by a discussion once overheard between two students of theology, aged respectively five and six, on this very point of doctrine.

“I don't pray to Jesus,” said the young lady, “I pray to God.”

* “Peep of Day,” p. 19.

Idem., p. 52.

‡ *Idem.*, p. 38.

"But Jesus is God," replied he of a twelve-month's longer experience.

"How can you be papa and papa's son?" enquired the sceptic.

"I am not going to tell you how," was the oracular response of the defender of the faith, "but I am!! and Jesus and God are the same, and if you don't believe it, you'll go to hell!"

Only a theological squabble in Lilliput! settled, it will be observed by the stronger party, without right of appeal and with reference to a damnatory clause.

That the Bible is not a manual of physical science, may be to some a satisfactory answer on the one point, though it is difficult to see, why, fully admitting the fact, we should any longer allow poetry and fable to supersede the wondrous beauty of God's ever opening revelation in nature.

But whatever may be thought as to this, it is surely a monstrous thing to give children in place of the revelation of Jesus, the dry subtle definitions, in which men sought to present his character, in days when personal love to him was waning faint and cold. We are asked for bread—we offer a stone. Metaphysical propositions about the Deity cannot happily have great attractions for the young. They may confuse children, it is true, but the wranglings over them are usually deferred till riper years. But what is to be said, if our nursery classics are found maligning the character of God? What if they represent Him in a way that

can only repel? What if He be portrayed as doing acts, shewing tempers, at which in an earthly parent, our little ones would be terrified? What if God be pictured to them as harsh, revengeful, exacting, unsympathetic? What if the general view given of Him, be one that will make a child shudder in its cot, instead of clinging closely to Him in the dark, feeling His dear arms around it and saying, "Good night dearest, holiest Father," ere its eyes close in sleep?

The books shall speak for themselves—"all who do not love God, are the children of the devil. He leads them into sin and blinds them that they may not see their danger. He keeps them from all that is good, and if their hearts are not changed before they die, they must dwell with him in endless misery for ever. Such is the sad state of all who are not born again. Will you not ask for mercy?"*

"The day is coming when you will mourn over the hardness of your heart, for we read in the Bible that all those who forget God shall be turned into hell, Then it will be too late to ask for mercy."†

Here is quite enough to make it acknowledged that the devil is "very naughty" and that the occupants of the nursery generally are in a bad way, but how is their love to God to be excited and cherished? Thus,—"God had said to His Son a long while before, Adam and Eve and all their children must go to hell for their wickedness, unless you die instead of them.

* "The Prince of Peace," New Edition, p. 124.

† *Idem*, p. 54.

The Son promised that he would die for Adam and Eve and for their children. We are wicked and should go to hell, if Jesus had not promised to die for us.* We ought to love the Father and the Son because they had pity on us."

"God so loved the world that He gave his dear Son to live here and at last to die a cruel death for our sakes. For God is very just and He must punish sin. So out of pity Jesus Christ said *he would bear the punishment*. Therefore it was *for the sake of what Jesus was going to suffer*, that God would give His Holy Spirit."†

The dramatic instinct is strong in children. It is natural to them to think of themselves as in the position of those they read about, as transacting the same scenes, saying the same words; and their rendering of the above, will be something on this wise—

"I went near the fire and papa was dreadfully angry and said he would whip me and shut me up in a dark room, Oh for so long! and then James, that is my elder brother you know, came in and papa said, 'James you shall be whipped and shut up instead of your brother.' And he was, you know, and papa gave me some delicious cakes because James was shut up."

Is it thus that a child's reverence and love to a Heavenly Father is to be drawn forth? Is it thus that the meaning of justice, goodness and love is to be conveyed? The relationship of children to the object

* "Peep of Day," p. 6.—62.

† "Prince of Peace," p. 53.

of their enforced love and reverence is set forth in a manner equally repellant. They continue under the fierce anger of a Father, whom they are expected to love, *until* a magical change, which they may or may not undergo, is effected in their hearts : that briefly is their condition.

Thoughtlessness and fun, as natural to children as dancing amid woods is to sunbeams, are, as all who study children must know, the main causes of their little troubles and disgraces. It is an exceptional thing to find a child deliberately purposed to offend ; yet these are the words put into its mouth,

“ Yet I have sinned against my God,
And disobeyed ten thousand times,
Am I prepared to feel His rod,
Avenging my ten thousand crimes ? ” *

Children are taken to chapel and church and made to “ sit still ” through a service, the length of which is trying to their seniors, the latter half of which sometimes exhausts their patience. On their return there is this lecture in store for the young worshippers—

“ Now when you are in God’s house and you ought to be praying to Him and hearing His word, are not your thoughts often taken up with other things ?

“ Maybe, you are thinking of what you bought the day before, or you are noticing the dress of those before you,” (what wonder poor child !) “ or you are wondering what such an one is doing. These and

* “ Peep of Day,” p. 186.

many other foolish and worldly thoughts come into your mind and you quite forget you are in the presence of the great and holy God. You are therefore no better than the Jews were, and though you may go to his house, Jesus is no better pleased with you, than he was with them. And if you continue as you are, he will give you no blessing, but at the last great day he will drive you away from before his face."*

By teachers of another and a newer school, the position of children to their heavenly Father is defined differently and in a way, one is bound to say, more likely to give hope and spirit. But these latter teachers, even the very best of them, have recourse like the former to necromancy. For a magical influence to be waited for, they substitute a magical rite already performed.

Child. "I was born in sin and a child of wrath."

Teacher. "And when you were baptized you were cleansed from your sin . . . you were made a member of Christ; who then *became* your Father, and what inheritance was promised you?"

Child. "Heaven was my inheritance, and God *became* my Father."†

Children thus liberated at the outset from the penalties of hell, seem to be incurring them afresh every day they live. The loving tender Father in heaven, becomes a stern inquisitor, before whom the child must appear at bed-time to answer questions

* "Prince of Peace," p. 47.

† "Sacred Allegories," p. 16.

involving the motive of every action throughout the day; questions, some of which assume the simple heart of childhood to be a charnel house of iniquity.

"The Path of Holiness" as laid down by an "English Priest" makes the failure to keep the festival of "St. Chad Bishop," or the use of any words from the Bible for "riddles" (a suggestion a child would instantly seize upon) as sins, to be forgiven only after penance, counsel and absolution, have been asked of the "Spiritual Father."

Thousands of children are now in one way and another being taught "to confess a sham guilt and prate of an unreal rescue from an unfelt danger." They are being led to think of Him who made them and has redeemed them, as more insatiable in His cruelty than the Patrician who could throw a slave to the lampreys for the breakage of a vase, or the Roman Matron who could crucify a girl for the misplacement of a hair-pin. Wandering through continental churches, travellers turn in disgust from the coarse representations of a God trampling down His victims into the flames, yet pictures very little different are allowed to stare down from our nursery shelves.

How many parents ever read carefully the religious books that are put into the hands of their children, or stop to think of the way in which the revelation of God is being set forth to them? Yet thereupon are depending issues the most momentous to the political, no less than to the religious life of the nation.

Cassandra's warning, that intellectual advancement and religious thought are becoming antagonistic, comes none too soon, and if the religious thought of the future is to be influenced by such theological teaching as has been quoted, no greater cause for the decadence of a nation is needed, for if union with *One better than the best we can conceive* be once generally accepted as obtainable, only by excited individual experience, or by the practice of magical rites, then it is inevitable that the keepers of these mysteries and the charmers who can excite these experiences, must become the recognized mediators between the divine Father and the child—the spiritual guides—the spiritual tyrants of the people. If religious life in England is to become thus enslaved, then indeed the danger is imminent and terrible, for there will follow such an outbreak of educated thought, as will make the churches rock to their centre. No relapse into the priest-ridden condition of Spain or Scotland in past times, can ever be suffered in England without society being shaken to its foundations, without civil religious war being declared.

In returning to the old revelation is salvation. There is that still left, bright and beautiful as ever, for the darlings whom the blessed Saviour would circle in his arms, for those whose angels do alway behold his Father's face.

We have to tell children of the unutterable, un-

alterable love of their Divine Father, manifested by Jesus to all men ; of the new and living way opened up to the Father through ideal sonship, through simple trust and free loving obedience. In loyalty to that ideal, they have oneness with their elder brother and through him an eternal union, with his Father and theirs.

As teachers, our first object must be, to appeal to the religious sense in childhood, revealing One better than self—One far above self—"our Father which art in heaven ;" to excite towards Him, childlike love and free unwavering trust. Our second object must be, to set forth the completed objective revelation of that Father's love, in the life of Jesus, and to shew, how in making that life their own ; how by the exercise of simple trust, of free loving obedience, the way of children to the Father is open before them and their eternal union with Him is secured. It is no creeds about God, that we need seek to imprint upon the minds of children. It is personal love towards God, that we must strive to cherish in their hearts. Their salvation must be offered to them, as no mystery, but the simple result of their loyalty to the revelation of a Father's love, worked out, through their growing realization of the ideal sonship of Jesus. It must be explained to them fearlessly, that they are not slaves to sin, or automata to work out animal instincts, but the free-born children of their Father. As free-born, they cannot owe their sonship to any magic rites, of which they were un-

conscious, or to any magic influence, of which hereafter they may fancy themselves partakers.

Our face must be set utterly against cultivating in children a talent for *self-vivisection*. By nature, they are truthful, simple and open. To arouse in them suspicion of every motive ; to make them be for ever probing their heart and gazing upon the evil of it, is a hateful thing. Under such teaching, children may be developed into unexceptionable Jesuits, Roman or Protestant, as it may happen ; they may be dragged through life in terror of God, the devil and the grave, but they will never be made to realize the glory of sonship. That realization may and will be theirs, if we send them on their way fearless and rejoicing, trusting their soul, their life, their all, to the Father who is guiding them ; with one only aim, to follow in the path where Jesus leads and with his words upon their lips, "Not my will but Thine be done."

It is in the sacred circle of Family life, that these eternal truths—the glory of God's Fatherhood, the glory of the ideal sonship of Jesus, may be set forth to little ones in language which they need no education to master, in characters that will be ineffaceable from their hearts. Upon parents, upon elder brothers and sisters, lies the momentous duty of making manifest by their own lives, the divine glories of Fatherhood and sonship, of leading children upward from the earthly to the heavenly, through the sacraments of human relationships.

Family life is a peculiar glory of England; if the day should ever come, when the ties of that life are loosened; when its duties become considered irksome; when the name Home loses its power over the English heart, in that day Cassandra may well prophesy our coming decadence. From that decadence, the gospel of the Father and the Son will save us, if we will receive it.

THE GOSPEL OF WORSHIP.

WORSHIP, we understand to be the articulate voice of religion, the response of humanity to the revelation made through the religious sense of the soul; the manifested recognition of, not a wider, but a greater than self, above self, *One better than the best we can conceive*. It is moreover a universal response. "The world," say the Hindu scriptures, "is not for him that doth not worship!" and we have already seen that history, and where history fails, language testifies, not merely to the universality of men's worship, but to the fact that from the beginning, the object of man's worship was one better than self, above self—The Strong One, the One to be revered, my Lord, the Highest One. For the great races of mankind retained this in common, that they worshipped, not themselves or each other, not any particular race, nor the collective race, but One in advance of themselves and the race, One to be invoked only by names expressing the grandest glory, the most dazzling brightness; One revealed as the Heaven Father. In proportion to man's disregard of that revelation, or loyalty to it, did his worship become servile and debased, or free and ennobling, clearing away for

him the clouds behind which "shines the beauty of the loved One," and bringing him near unto the presence of the Eternal.

If we are right in maintaining the glory of the Divine Fatherhood to be a revelation to humanity, through the religious sense of the soul, we can dismiss at once the ingenious speculations of philosophers, as to the origin of worship, for just as human language testifies to man's cravings for fellowship with his fellow-man, so does worship express his yearning after his birth-right, his inheritance—communion with the heaven Father—so that if we find that long before Abraham arose to proclaim a new name, the colossal temple at Babylon, which bore upward to the heavens the shrine of the divinity, contained neither image nor similitude, we are at no loss to understand such a protest for spiritual worship. Man's inherent tendency to worship the unseen, must have been the result of the influence of the unseen working in his soul, an influence manifesting itself universally, though in varying degrees, and proving him to have grasped, however feebly, the great truth to which the study of natural phenomena is daily bearing witness, "The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Preachers sometimes warn us against "self worship," but the use of the expression shows how widely the popular idea of worship has become at variance with the original and true one. Self-love is man's *animal*

inheritance. A man may love himself, make a wreck of self by pandering to self, but the soul refuses its tribute of worship, until it finds One that it recognises as *above self*. The basest systems of heathenism form no exception. Before idols are worshipped, they must be regarded as the representation of One more powerful, more exalted, than the worshipper; servile fear, not child-like love, may prompt the offering, *but there being an offering at all*, is a universal tribute of mankind to the claims of One not self, above self.

A moment's consideration of what worship is *not*, may help to dissipate some false views regarding it and aid towards a truer apprehension of what it really is. It is not mere expression of love. With the love that takes the form of patriotism and gives its all for the land of its birth, worship is not associated. Of the love, divinest upon earth, which a parent will show towards the child who, to use common language, has forfeited all claim to be loved; of the love that prompts the rescue of the sin-struck and the fallen, worship of the object loved can form no part. Nor are outward expressions of reverence, much less of self-abasement, to be identified with worship. "Religion that consists in postures of the limbs, is just a little inferior to the exercise of the wrestler,"* so that the lady who may be seen arranging the folds of her dress before "prostration" at the altar, is no more of necessity a worshipper, than the Hindoo who

* "Verses of Yémana."

bows himself before the car of Juggernaut. Neither are mental processes of devotion to be confounded with worship. Loyola, who better than most men knew how to excite the feelings and to tame the spirit, reduced such processes to a system: but not all the acts of contrition and faith, not all the most desperate and reckless attempts at mental discipline, can raise the soul of man into that serenest atmosphere, in which "it loses itself, in hope to find its God."

In one earthly relationship, and in one only, do we get some dim notion of what worship really means. In the spring time of life, when the buds are bursting and the growing light of morn seems to tell of a day that can know no weariness nor satiety of enjoyment, young people "fall in love." In those sunny hours, before a ripe acquaintance has shown the imperfections in both characters, there is often displayed such an absolutely pure, disinterested love, on a woman's part at any rate, and such a temporary self-forgetfulness, such an image of perfection is realised, so complete a unity of purpose, so deep and constant a devotion, as must needs lift a man above himself, and may be to him, if he will but receive it, a sacrament of Divine grace through which he may be drawn upward to the worship of One infinitely above self. But all worship of an object less than this can be but temporary, because the object must prove itself to be *imperfect*.

It is this expressed universal need for a *perfect*

object of worship, which makes the new gospel preached with such winning sadness by Professor Clifford, a hopeless one. For he would explain to us the not-ourself (which as heretofore understood in these pages, speaks to us only through the religious sense), as nothing more than "the voice of our father man," *i.e.*, the accumulated experience of the race. But how can this collective self become an object which we can adore? For adoration is the outcome of spiritual communion and sympathy, which must be a *mutual* condition if it is to satisfy, and can be realised only when our adoration is for a conscious object. Were it possible for us to make the collective goodness of men the object of our worship, we should be horrified at our devotions by something, that for ought we can do or say, insists on standing side by side with it in the temple of humanity—the collective imperfections, sins and vices of men. A god that turns out to be a *mere man*, will fail to command the adoration of mankind.

There is nothing on earth to draw forth true and lasting worship, and the history of mankind is in harmony with the religious sense of the soul, in regarding worship as the language of religion, imperfect and stammering though it often be: the expression of man's longing after the Heaven Father; an everlasting demand for communion with Him. Like other languages, worship has its marked stages of growth. Springing from *the contemplation* of One better than

the best it can conceive, it rises to *aspiration* after Him—grows by *devotion* to Him—and becomes perfected in *communion* with Him ; thus are marked the steps by which the child of the Heaven Father, the priest of the most high God, draws nigh into the Holiest of Holies and comes face to face with the majesty of the Eternal. Not one of these steps can be ignored. Stop at *contemplation* and the overwhelming sense of the Divine greatness and man's littleness forces on the soul a longing for absorption into the infinite, for a Nirvana, in which the soul is lost and God alone remains. Content yourself with *aspiration* and you pave hell with good intentions ; the beauty of the universe becoming a more powerful spell than the goodness and tenderness of its maker ; imagination taking the place of faith as the interpreter of the Divine and the soul regarding itself as a fragment of the beautiful part of creation. To be in harmony with the spirit of the universe, and oblivious of everything interfering with a dream of perfection, was characteristic of some of those Greek philosophers who came so near the truth and yet so utterly failed of reaching it. Do away with *contemplation* and *aspiration*, as is so much the fashion in these days : treat them as unpractical ; regard *devotion* to God, as best evidenced by years of unceasing restless work at the duty of life ; take as your one rule *laborare est orare* ; let spiritual life take care of itself and surely, but insensibly, spiritual life will droop. In

the name of Christ you may cast out demons and do many wonderful works, but there will be no time for communion with the Father. Or exercise devotion after the manner of the so-called religious life ; make life an attempt to be fitted for God, *by a daily confession of the hopelessness of being so* ; by distrust of every thought and action ; by suspicion of every motive ; and some sacrificial system is the inevitable refuge of the soul. Man is told, he must offer a perfect sacrifice if he would be accepted of the Most High—he answers, I cannot, but I will give the first-fruits of my body for the sin of my soul, or he will clutch at the Augustinian theology, as a straw thrown to a drowning man, and place his sins and failings on another, and accept “the finished work of Christ” as a substitute for the offering of his own life. Thus then, the conditions of true worship must be observed equally and harmoniously ; *contemplation*, not of self, but of God, “O Lord, how great are thy works, righteous and true art thou, O thou king of saints ;” *aspiration*, not after the immensities, or powers not ourselves, but after the *One better than the best we can conceive*, the Heaven Father, “My soul is athirst for God, yea even for the living God, when shall I come to appear before God” and *devotion*, not to incessant daily toil, or to the self-scrutiny of a cloister, but to the will of our Father in heaven and to the great purpose which he is steadily unfolding, “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and *to finish his work.*”

It is the great secret of the Roman Catholic system, that it has recognized the necessity of these various elements in worship, and has afforded scope in its teaching for them all. Hence its triumphs over such different classes of minds and its hold upon such opposite temperaments. To understand the popular Protestant idea of worship, we must go back to the time of Luther. The Reformation was (so far as it affected religion) an explosion of passion against the degradation of the ethical side of Christianity. Pardon of sin had become a question of money ; licence to sin was the reward of a long purse. Is it any wonder, if the trumpet call of the Augustine monk, "Salvation by faith," stirred the hearts of men and moulds the churches to this hour? Had Luther been but true to his great master, his watch-word would be now the rallying cry for free religious thought, instead of having become, as it has done, the Shibboleth of a narrow theology. S. Paul, had indeed preached salvation by faith, but with him faith was no mere *belief*—*it was loyalty to the ideal Sonship of Jesus*—acceptance of him, as the objective revelation of the Father, opening up a new and living way through child-like love and free obedience. With Luther, faith was a piece of magic ; "it is impossible," he says, "for a Christian man to lose his salvation by any number of sins, unless he ceases to believe ; nothing can damn the soul but unbelief," *i.e.*, in the substitution of Christ's punishment for the sinner's.

The Reformation introduced a new object of worship—the Bible and the Bible only, was to be the religion of Protestants, and to that maxim, bad as it is in itself and grossly misunderstood as it has been through want of education in the country, may be traced those interminable wranglings of religious bodies, which have done more than anything else to discredit Christianity with thoughtful minds. It is a common thing to hear it said, that these differences of opinion manifest religious life and vigour, and if it were only charitably held differences of opinion that separate the sects, we might indulge an optimist view of the religious world; but unfortunately in their application of Chillingworth's maxim, the churches have out-heroded Herod. The Bible has been treated in the popular mind, as one book, verbally inspired and the sole revelation bestowed upon man. There is no burlesque upon religious truth, no outrage upon Christian morality, that under the mask of religion, has not pleaded some one or other passage of a supposed infallible book; and among those sects which have taken Jesus as the fountain of Christian life and have done great acts of Christian daring, where has been his Divine charity? It is not honest differences of opinion, but *the damning of other peoples' opinion*, that has alienated educated men from the popular theology. It is its restriction of Divine revelation to a book, that has set science in deadly opposition to it. It is its outrage of the first principles

of justice and morality, that is bringing about its downfall and causing wide-spread scepticism.

If worship be the language of the religious sense of the soul, if it be the expression of man's searching after the Heaven Father, if by the three-fold cord of contemplation, aspiration and devotion, it fits the soul for communion with the Eternal One, it must be asked sorrowfully, where among the Protestant sects is worship to be found? Is it not too true, that for worship, which testifies to the at-onement, there has been substituted a system of begging for a share in the atonement, and for health, wealth and prosperity? In short, is there any very material difference between our popular prayers and that of the Crow Indian? "I am poor, that is bad, make me a chief; give me plenty of horses, give me fine clothing. I ask for good spotted horses. Give me a large tent, give me a great many horses, let me steal fine horses; grant it to me; give instruments for me, amusement, blankets too and fine meats to eat." *

Our national Church does throughout her liturgy protest in favour of worship; she takes up the triumphant words of the old prophets, and in a great burst of prayerful adoration, concludes her communion service. In that service, the declaration of God's free and loving forgiveness is assumed to introduce the worshipper into the higher region of communion, and surely, if the soul who has drawn closely to its

* "The Great Divide," p. 124.

Father and at His feet has laid its load of selfishness and care ; if that soul in presence of Him, who knows its hatred of sin and longing to be free from it, is not fitted to offer to Him true and spiritual worship, when is it to be fitted ? Is its fitness to come from years of brooding regrets, or from a sudden change from this life to another ?

It may be said, indeed it is said, that it is for "miserable sinners" to pray and there is no need to deny that it is so, but no Christian life is possible, no Christian worship is possible, *if we are always miserable sinners*. If after forgiveness we are no better than before, then is forgiveness a delusion and a sham ; then indeed, had we better betake ourselves to the religious life and pray and whip ourselves to the end of the chapter. But not only do the law, the prophets and the gospel witness to it, that we need not be for ever miserable sinners, but the religious sense of the soul, revealing to us the glory of the Divine Fatherhood, declares *that it cannot be*. If there be one truth in the Bible, beyond the power of Protestantism to juggle into something different to what it is, that Truth is the full, complete forgiveness of sin ; not a forgiveness which is a mere escape from punishment, but a forgiveness which is a Divine influence in the soul, cleansing it and fitting it for communion with its ideal. For a soul in the enjoyment of such communion, it is just as impossible not to lament its own shortcomings, which so often withstand the

Divine influence, as it is for it to be ever morbidly gazing on those shortcomings ; ever acknowledging God's power to deliver it from them and yet ever groaning as a miserable sinner, that it is not delivered. We wrong God and ourselves, by fulsome expressions of repentance, by ceaseless cries for pardon of guilt, which unless we make Him a liar, were forgiven long ago : our thoughts become centred on ourselves, not on Him ; our aspiration is after freedom from punishment, not after His divine beauty. We make the perfecting of worship—communion with Him, an impossible thing, because we fill the air with the groans of miserable sinners, instead of with His praises who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Some send Pilgrim on his way in half hope, half doubt, that at the end of it the burden may drop from his shoulders : others positively bid him hug it closer, and by way of stimulus for the day's work, go carefully over its contents ; in the great allegory, the burden rolls down the hill, and, says Pilgrim, " I saw it no more."

There is the stimulus to Christian life, *there* sounds the first note, that swells into the triumph of Christian worship. S. Paul, who without affectation could say "we have the mind of Christ;" who had received that spiritual, and therefore higher revelation of his Master than they who knew him in the flesh, bases all upon this, "Ye are dead unto sin, ye live unto God. Ye died with Christ, now live with him. Ye were buried with Christ, rise now with him, not to some far away

material heaven, but to *newness of life*. Forget the things that are behind. With one mind and one mouth, glorify God. Glorify Him in your bodies and spirits, which are His. Sin shall not have dominion over you. Rejoice in the Lord always, for He hath not appointed you unto wrath, but to salvation. He that hath begun a good work in you, will finish it, therefore rejoice evermore."

It is time that we ceased to confound Prayer in its popular sense, with Worship; time that we realised, that while the one is as common to debased idolatry as to Christianity, the other is the summit of the great ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, up which, through the might of the ideal Son-ship, each child of God may rise towards the glories of the unseen. It is useless to deny the withering power with which science attacks prayer that is nothing more than begging for the good things of this life, and indeed we may be thankful that such an attack on it has come, for though the overthrow of superstition in men's minds does doubtless for a time shake their faith in the basis which superstition had overgrown (and the evidence of such a shaking is around us on every hand), fears as to the result are groundless. The basis of the religious sense in man, *is immoveable*, and when the whirlwind has passed by, when the tempest of excited thought has gone over from the soul, the religious sense will make its old appeal to the glory of

God's Fatherhood ; to the revelation of the ideal Sonship of Jesus, and prayer will be raised from being the art of begging, into its true place in Christian worship. The words of Jesus, " Ask and ye shall receive," will be no longer interpreted apart from his own life, or outside the hearing of his own voice, " If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your own children, how much more shall my Father which is in heaven, *give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*" More of spiritual strength, more of submission to his Father's will—this was the burden of the prayers of Christ and will inevitably become the key-note of our prayers, as we more fully realise in ourselves the ideal Sonship, as it becomes our meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent us, and to finish His work. Nor can such prayers be unpractical either as regards ourselves or the world, for between mental and physical force, there exists a mysterious though evidently close connection, and if the one were but guided by the prayers of ideal Sonship, it is not too much to say, that three-fourths of the troubles of life, would be at an end. Men (thanks to science) are beginning to understand, that it is *their own will*, not God's will, that they should be racked with pain, and that their children, for want of fresh air, pure water, and of temperance in their parents, should grow up unfit for the work of life ; that pestilence should carry terror to the hovel and panic to the palace ; that the great nations of

the earth should close in deadly struggle for supremacy, and that the Church of Christ should become a bear-garden.

Prayer that is dictated by the spirit of ideal sonship to the Father—prayer for higher and more spiritual life—for the good of others—for the coming of the kingdom of Christ—prayer that makes daily life sacred and each act of daily duty bright, as it adds one more work done by the brethren of Jesus, to finish the Father's work on earth—changes insensibly into Worship, which will transfigure the soul with the glory that shone round Jesus in Mount Tabor's vision. Against the attitude of a soul in worship, science can do nothing, for the soul therein reaches a region where science can neither follow nor dispute. And if science should still tauntingly ask,—“Can any good thing come out of spiritual life?” it may be fearlessly answered,—“Come and see: *you* are engrossed with the contemplation of the seen and temporal; *you* are aspiring to a knowledge of the force, that causes and regulates visible phenomena; *you* are devoting all your energies to unravel the mystery of matter, but where is the object of your communion, of your worship, without which you must for ever fail to satisfy ‘the religious sentiment in the nature of man?’ You offer forces and immensities, but with them the soul can be conscious of no communion. Culture offers a power not ourselves, but the soul refuses to be satisfied with anything but ‘*One better*

than the best it can conceive.' And if in loyalty to the objective revelation of that One; if in a realisation in my own life, of the ideal sonship; if, through simple trust, through free loving obedience, I find myself rising out of the slavedom of mere educated animal instincts and triumphing over the temptations which they are ever presenting to me, then does your great test, experience, confirm the revelation made through the religious sense of the soul in humanity, of *One better than the best I can conceive*, the Heaven-Father with whom communion is my birthright."

II.

In speaking harshly of popular theology, let us above all things distinguish between the theology and those who accept it. Men are always better than their creeds and that the Christian life should have been manifested as it has been, by those whose theology is a science of vindictiveness and partiality, gives us some dim conception of the power which that life shall be in the regeneration of the world, when it goes back again to the old revelation and to the simplicity of Jesus. But though the few may rise above their theology and free themselves from its bondage, its baneful influence on the many is too obvious, and truth can only be dishonoured by failing to point this out. If as regards worship, there is justice in what has been said of the tendency of popular theology: if, for communion with God, to be attained

in *worship*, it has substituted the *art of begging*, then it must be admitted that in a truer conception of Christian worship and in a return to it, lies the way to a higher, nobler life for the individual and for the nation. The subject is as well worth the thoughts of statesmen as of the clergy, for since religion is no less the bond than the basis of society and nations, it is all-important that the language of religion should be heard testifying to a basis that is immoveable, to a bond that no discoveries of science can weaken, and no insidious attack of culture destroy.

The cries of the religious world have become loud and incessant:—"The masses are out of our reach; the women are going to the confessional,"—and really the cries of the religious world are pitiable, for there seems despair of there being any help for it, and the Church vies with the Methodists, in getting up "revivals," by which *a sense of sin* may be awakened in the masses. From a false premise can come no satisfactory conclusion. The absence of people from church is no more a sign of irreligion, than is the rush to the confessional a proof, that "the man of sin" is about to be revealed.

May it not be, that an explanation is to be found, in what would seem to be a fact, that the force of the English Reformation has, after many mighty results, well nigh exhausted itself? That power was, as we have seen (so far as it affected religion), an explosion of passion against the degradation of the

ethics of Christianity. For the last two centuries, these ethics have been exalted by Protestantism at the expense of what underlies them and alone gives them inspiration — *the spiritual life* — which can be supported only by communion with God. Here and there have arisen Quietists and Mystics, but their very principles forbade them being apostles, and as a matter of fact, the Christian life has become confounded, sometimes, as in the eighteenth century, with moral teaching; sometimes, as in late years, with incessant efforts at evangelising the heathen, the multiplication of rival churches and chapels, testaments for the Chinese, fancy work for the Africans, church congresses, congregational unions, tea-meetings, prayer meetings, missionary meetings; till it came to pass, that excitement was alike the food and stimulant of so-called evangelical communities.

But the religious sense of the soul could not be satisfied thus. It prompted the old longing, "My soul is athirst for God!" Was it to be slaked by fancy work for Africans? "My heart crieth out for the living God!" Was a tea-meeting any answer to that cry? "I am disquieted within me, until I rest in Thee!" pleaded the soul with the Heaven Father. Could a congress, or a conference, give the rest it sought?

Other offers were not wanting. New schools of philosophy sprung up, some promising the truth

through "the pure form of thought," others declaring truth to be unknowable, unattainable. Advancing criticism began to destroy the claims to infallibility, made for the book, which had become the idol of Protestants, and science, inch by inch drove back the popular theology. At a well chosen moment, Sacerdotalism with an air of grace and culture, addressed itself to the religious sense, offering rest in the living God; rest from the incessant excitement of popular theology, which had degenerated into positive delirium. It offered a forgiveness, that was to be the source of a new life—a brotherhood, that was to know never a division—a perpetual worship,—a communion, that should make this earth a heaven. We can recall the host of Englishmen to whom that offer was not made in vain; noble hearts and simple minds were among them, to whom may God of his mercy grant the rest for which they sought; but to a large number an infallible church was as unsatisfactory as an infallible book, and Sacerdotalism was only magic under another name. For them, philosophy and science had irresistible attractions. Repelled by the popular theology, they threw themselves with energy into what offered scope, not merely for cultivated minds, but for bold and fearless inquiry; and the masses (more especially since the introduction of cheap journalism and increased facilities for inter-communication) have been carefully watching all these movements and forming their own opinion upon them.

To say because they are forming unfavourable opinions of popular theology, that therefore there is a wide-spread irreligion in the country, is a misinterpretation of the spirit of the times, for there are in all classes of society indications of a reviving yearning after *the better than the best conceivable*. That hard and very unorthodox questions are being asked about it, is undeniable, and the religious teachers answer, "We must bring people to church—we must awaken in them a sense of sin." The conclusion of all this must be a failure, because the premise is false. A sense of sin clings to men, just as does a sense of bodily infirmity. It is not a sense of sin that needs *awakening*; that is the very thing from which men are asking to be saved. They want a deeper sense of spiritual life and truth, they are at unrest for lack of communion with that *better than the best they can conceive*. The soul, leaving its home and taking its heritage with it, has journeyed into a far country and wasted its substance in riotous living. The famine came; nothing was left to supply food for its spiritual life, and in its misery it has tried the husks that the swine do eat. In sore distress, through doubt and fear, perhaps through utter hopelessness, it will come to itself and say, "I will arise and go to my Father."

And verily, in returning shall it be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be its strength. Pleading again the glory of God's Fatherhood, realizing again its royal birthright of sonship, loyal to the

ideal once for ever manifested to man, it will draw nigh to its rest in communion with the Father. The ethics of Jesus were the outcome of a Divine life fostered in years of contemplation and aspiration, and never even was doing good allowed to degenerate into a *rush*. Fresh from the worship of the Father came the Teacher into the din and turmoil of the then religious world. Then, as now, was there a demand for signs and wonders, and he answered sorrowfully, "Unless ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe; ye hypocrites, there shall be no sign given you. Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Then, as now, was there a striving among his professed followers, who should be the greater in the kingdom of heaven? And he called a *little child* unto him and set *him* in the midst of them. Then, as now, the religious world compassed heaven and earth to make one proselyte; works were done to be seen of men; the chief seats and uppermost rooms were loved, and heavy burdens and grievous to be borne were laid on men's shoulders, and Jesus rebuking it all with the calmness of suppressed power, answered and said, "I thank thee, O Father, God of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto *babes*. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth perfectly the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man

perfectly the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son is minded to reveal Him. Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Says the author of "Supernatural Religion"—"The *morality* of Jesus is beyond development, consisting as it does, of principles unlimited in their range and inexhaustible in their application." We may say the same of his spiritual teaching, as set forth in the words recorded by S. Matthew. It is beyond development, it is final, the verification of it being untouched by questions affecting the date of the gospels, or the correct rendering of Greek words into English, or what are misnamed capricious interferences with the Laws of Nature.

To the question, Is it true or false? the religious sense of the soul will give the same answer which it has been heard giving from the beginning. Communion with the *One better than the best conceivable*, can never result from even the most perfect knowledge of things material. Science, lead us where it will, touches only on the border-land of the unseen and eternal. Only in the divine relationship of Father and Son, is the longing of the soul satisfied; only in the oneness of will and spirit between the child of God and his Father, is there rest for them that labour and are heavy laden. In the ideal son was that communion perfected. For each one of us, it is a goal, far off it may be, or who knows how near? but in the very striving after which will

come rest—rest from theological strife, from the discord of creed-makers, from the delirium of the religious world,—rest in the Father, through the Son.

III.

Whether or not the explanation which has been offered of the departure from Christ's ideal of worship in these days of religious excitement be the true one, there will probably be a pretty general opinion that it has been departed from. We have said that in a return to it lies the way to a higher, nobler life, for the individual and the nation. Nor are we left to guess at the means of regaining a well-nigh lost ideal. The revelation of the Divine glory of Fatherhood set forth in the person of the ideal Son, and made intelligible to us through our blessed relationships on earth leads to the conclusion, that *a spiritual religious worship in family life* must be the starting point of a new reformation.

There is much talk about individual conversion, perhaps even still more about church privileges and church fellowship. Those who dwell upon the one, regard the soul as a battle-field between God and the devil. Those who exalt the other, think of the individual as a fraction of animation in a body, the mission of which is to be a depository of sacred mysteries, and to awaken a sense of sin in the masses.

But the *family* has been lost sight of as the natural home of religious life and worship. Now, whether we

disintegrate the family, by giving exclusive attention to the individual, or whether we profane the family by substituting for its sacredness the supposed superior sanctity of a church guild or sisterhood, we despise the order which our Father in Heaven has marked as holy.

The tendency to put asunder what God hath joined together, religion and family life, is unmistakable.* Quietism appealing with too exclusive fervour to the subjective side of the Divine revelation, gives heed to the religious sense in the individual soul, or asserts the religious sense to be the possession of *the few*. The sects have fenced in their little folds with a higher or a lower wall, each bearing the inscription, "Lo, God is *here*." Sacerdotalism is for ever offering its magic, as the Alpha and Omega of the Christian life, and sets forth "the higher life," as an improvement on family life, in many homes, the priest or the pastor, rather than the parent, being the minister of God. At home, so it is taught, "the higher life" cannot be fostered, nor is it any wonder if to attain so unnatural a thing as this higher life is supposed to be, unnatural means must be employed. Delicate girls rob nature to pay grace, by going at the most dangerous hours of the day to kneel in cold churches, or by fasting to an extent of which their well-fed, well-bred father confessors, ignorant of the laws of health, can have no conception of the danger. Other communions give

* The *highest* order in the society of "The Holy Cross" is attainable only by celibate priests.

way to the religious debauchery of prayer-meetings, tea-meetings and vestry-consultations. All, all seem bent on ignoring the great truth of God, *the sacredness of family life.*

To regret all this is useless, to attempt a cure for it is hopeless, until parents realise that the blame of it lies with themselves. Is it to be wondered at if young people (more especially of the sex which has the stronger craving after religious life and worship, as gilding for the dull routine of life) should be dissatisfied with "a portion of Scripture" in the morning, or with a five minutes' grace said on Sunday morning round the breakfast table, representing the family's worship of God for the coming week? What are parents doing to make intelligible to their children the Divine glory of fatherhood? The father,—is he the best friend, the chosen companion of his children and their confidant; the one to whom sorrows and sins, no less than joy and merriment, may be brought? Does he seem to them a natural leader of their united worship of the unseen Father? Or is he thought of, as one who goes out early and comes home late, bringing a great deal of the dust of life with which to blind his family? The mother,—does she throw a calm, unruffled atmosphere around household duties and household trials? Would she seem to her children, if she led their morning and evening hymn of praise, the fittest image of those angels who chant glory to God in the Highest before

the throne of the Eternal? Or is she thought of as the provider—the getter up of parties—the chooser of dresses—the arranger of marriages? Between the two types of parental character there will be many grades of difference and in England, where the bonds of family life are still, thank God, strong and outwardly respected, it may be hoped that the lowest type is but rarely exemplified, *but until the highest type becomes the ideal*, national home life among us, will fail of being what God intended it should be; the interpreter of a life Divine, an ever fresh source of moral righteousness, of Christ-like quietude and spiritual power. Men must realise, that for them there is a duty greater than the public service of the country, or the amassing of wealth, or the pursuit of dilettantism; a duty that devolves upon them in virtue of *their universal priesthood*. To them has been entrusted the dispensing of that mighty sacrament of grace, *home life*, through which, dimly indeed, but in veriest truth, may be apprehended the nature and character of the Eternal One, the Heaven-Father; in which may be realised, a union of mind and will, and spirit, leading upward to and making in some sort intelligible, a oneness yet to be perfected, in a state eternal and unchanging, between the soul and Him who has revealed himself to it in the glory of Fatherhood and for ever confirmed His revelation through a Son, Ideal and Eternal.

When the *family* is re-established as the true and natural home of religion, such religion being no

longer confounded with adherence to a church party or shibboleth, or the acceptance of this or that creed, but being a return to the ideal of Jesus—loyalty to ideal sonship,—having its source, as well as its end, in communion with the Father, through simple trust in, and free righteous obedience to his will, then will cease the need to urge family worship, for it will have become a necessity. It will be the simple child-like expression of love and devotion to the Father; thanksgiving for his goodness in daily bearing with and forgiving us; for His eternal revelation of Himself in the glory of Fatherhood and for confirming it once and for ever in the manifestation of the ideal son. The religion of sonship, which is the religion of Jesus, cannot find its natural or full voice in the perpetual groans of miserable sinners: simple trust, free loving obedience, loyalty to the Father's will, devotion to the ideal son, must speak out in a worship of praise and joy. The things that are behind will be forgotten, save as they are warning and help in pressing on to those that are before, the prize of the high calling of the Father in the Son, even the perfecting of an eternal spiritual communion.

Family worship will seem incomplete in expression, without the voice of song. A room will not offer the same field for a good voice as a church, but neither will it deter those with but little gift for music from disturbing the occupants of the neighbouring pew. The sound of praise from the most sacred of all homes of

worship, will be as dear to our Father as the grandest volume of harmony that can sweep upwards from a surpliced choir, while the sensuous tones of the organ roll round the rich cathedral tracery.

A fixed hour, and a fixed place are great aids to family worship. Advocacy of the former may seem needless, for all who have ever tried regularity in household arrangements, know its value. Difficult to secure, it is yet worth any effort. The fixed place may be in some houses impracticable, but in very many it will be possible to devote one room to the purpose of worship, if not exclusively, at least for morning and evening prayer. There, members of the family might go for *individual*, as well as *collective* worship, *not as to a place more sacred than another*, but as to one where they might be free from distraction and where the objects surrounding them would be aids to the contemplation of the unseen and eternal.

In the conduct of family worship, there is one element for which we plead hard, *it is, a short interval of silence during the service*. The solemnity of this and its effect upon the worshipper, is evidenced in the ordination service of our national church and the sanction it there receives may induce acceptance of it from those who are the happier for ecclesiastical authority. Where the home service has become a high spiritual act of worship, it will be found that a united plea for pardon of the day's sins and failings;

the realisation of our Father's full, free, generous forgiveness; reading in the records of His love, ascription of glory to Him, with the aid of music and song, will raise the soul into the pure region of communion, and then it is, that in a short pause in the service, in a few minutes of silent adoration, there comes the unutterable consciousness of nearness to God. Then comes the answer to the question of humanity, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" and to the aspiration of humanity, "My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God!" It is the one lasting satisfaction to "the religious sentiment in the nature of man." With the force as of lightning—silent, irresistible, instantaneous, it shatters the structures of Scepticism, Augustinism, and Sacerdotalism. It is the acme, the perfection, the end of life, when the child of God, in simple trust, in the exercise of free righteous obedience, in loyalty to the ideal and Divine son, can break away from these shadows of time and sense, and while as priest its very worship utters "my Father is greater than I," can yet, as son, with proud humility declare, "I and my Father are one." Were but the daily experience of each household the supreme sacredness of family life, the Divinity that hedges it round would assert itself. There would be no need of sacerdotal *sesamés* at the door of the Eternal; no need of retreats *from* the family, for within that fold there would be heard the voice of Divine sonship

"peace, be still," and life's worry would be a calm, life's work and troubles would be a joy.

Even from a utilitarian point of view, the matter is worth consideration. The rush of life in these days is arousing the attention of the more thoughtful, and is being justly pointed to as a source of national danger. For *thinking*, there is no opportunity; book after book is glanced at, till we are satiated as are children with wild flowers in a wood. For *rest* there is no time. Our very amusements become matters of anxious thought, or are carried on in systematic disregard of time, seasons, and physical laws. There is *unrest* stamped on the spirit of the times—bodily unrest and mental: and deep down in the very fountain of life, man's spirit, there is the same utterance as of old, "our heart is disquieted within us, until it resteth on Thee." Why not give heed to the Divine voice? Why not have the rest that will come of returning to the simplicity of God's revelation brought home to us, in the filial, the family relationship? Other things have been tried—Churches and Creeds—Sacerdotalism and Positive Philosophy—Culture and Altruism—and unrest grows fiercer in all classes of society. Yet within each household might be found the sacraments of salvation: within each family might be had the answers to the enigmas of life: within each home circle might be verified the words of the ideal son, "No man fully knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomso-

ever the Son is minded to reveal Him. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and *I will give you rest.*"

Family worship is essentially the sphere for developing the *religious ideas of children*, who cannot be taught reverence for the eternal Father out of a book, or by such doggerel as—

"When to holy church they go,
Children must be quiet too."

But the little ones love to join in hymns when not overawed by the majesty of the parish beadle, or the grimness of the church verger; so that sharing in household worship may be made a treat to them; and from the reverence of those they love on earth, they will be prepared to direct their own innate feelings of reverence towards the Unseen and Eternal One, to whom they see all knees bent and whom they have called to and praised, as "Our Father which art in heaven."

Yet another of the relationships of life will be raised by family worship,—the relationship (avowedly the source of much difficulty and worry) between employers and employed. We of this generation, are perhaps blessed with the services of some who have been as friends to us from childhood, but is it likely to be so with our children? Is it not becoming a common thing for a servant's stay in a house to be measured by months rather than years? Is there not growing up a feeling of variance

between us and a class upon whom we are dependent for our interests and our comfort? Are not masters, as well as servants, coming to think of these interests as not merely different, but opposed to one another? It is customary to put the blame on servants. They are not what they used to be, we say, forgetting that we are very different from our fathers : simplicity of life is leaving us as we crowd into cities in our insatiable thirst for wealth and social precedence and excitement ; but we are surprised that simplicity is not maintained among those who serve us. Ambition, love of display, apeing the manners of a higher social rank, are among the characteristic faults of an age which has worshipped in the temple of the golden calf. Yet we cannot refrain our astonishment and anger that these faults have filtered down into the classes below us ! We have allowed England to merit the distinction of being the worst educated country in the world, though here and there my Lady Bountiful of the village has nurtured harlots for the city by instilling into her favourites a taste for music and embroidery. Our "registration offices" which live upon short service and frequent changes ; *our own shameless disregard of truth in the giving and receiving of characters*, have become so common as to be natural. With many of us, the health of our horses is of much greater importance than the comfort of our servants ; we have ceased to have ought in common with them ; we exchange no words with them, save of command or re-

proof, and then we wonder at their ingratitude ! They are the one class to whom no one has a mission. There are missionaries for the heathen, philanthropists for the outcast and poor, *for servants there are only masters, registration offices, and God knows what temptations.* And yet, who cannot tell of their thoughtfulness and patience in sickness ; their disinterestedness in times of misfortune ; their cheerfulness in a life that has comparatively nothing of that freedom which makes life dear to us. Yes, strange as it may seem, our servants are "our own flesh and blood ;" as much so even as the African, the Bulgarian, and the outcasts of our cities, for all of whom we can attend meetings and get up subscriptions. It would be outside the scope of this chapter to go more fully into the difficulties and duties of the relationship between employers and employed, but whether these are regarded in the home, or in a wider sphere, the trouble arising from them to both masters and servants is the result of a want of mutual knowledge, sympathy, and interest, and there is terrible national danger in the feeling which is growing among both classes, that things have gone too far to be remedied and that these opposing interests can never be reconciled.

But if the revelation of God be a revelation to the world ; if the gospel of Father and Son be a gospel for all men ; if religion be a bond of communion with the Father through that ideal son whose brethren and sisters we are, and if worship, the voice of religion, be

heard telling in each household of communion with the Father as the aim—the joy—the end of life,—can it be, but that the barrier between our servants and ourselves will be gradually, perhaps imperceptibly lessened? It cannot be broken down, it has been built with too great care for that, but it may crumble away before the consciousness that in worship there are no masters or servants, *that all we are brethren, sons of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* The change of tone in society cannot be effected in a day: we have sown the wind, and may have to reap the whirlwind. “Let come what come may,” the gospel of the son will save us, if we will receive it. “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.” A religion which is loyalty to the Father, child-like trust, free loving obedience, will make one in the ideal sonship master and servant, employer and employed. The letter of Christ’s teaching may be burlesqued and misunderstood,* but the spirit remains to give life eternal. Jesus had a gospel for the poor, as well as for the rich. His religion was no church creed or guild, but a veritable bond that held brethren to brethren and all to the Father, through sonship.

Political economy may exhort and Cassandra utter her warnings, but international societies and master’s associations will go on widening the social gulf, until, may be by some great disaster, we are

* As by “Joshua Davidson.”

driven back to the simplicity of the Divine revelation, and loyalty to the ideal son, in whom there is equality, which communism in its wildest dreams cannot comprehend, and which no rank or social position can destroy.

Let but the voice of the religion of Jesus, the worship of the Eternal Father, be heard morning and evening in each household, and men will go forth to their work with a consciousness of a Divine brotherhood, of a common Father, that would, in time, work a revolution the most silent and yet the greatest, that has ever been seen on earth.

It will be answered, that these ideas of family worship are *impracticable*. That in upper and middle-class society the engagements of life would not allow of their being carried out. Balls and parties and theatres, take up the evening, and in the morning there is no energy, no spirit for worship. If it be so, so much the worse for the engagements of life! Doubtless there are a small number of persons whose duties might prevent their presence at morning or evening service, but for their households is an alteration of the usual hours an impossibility? As regards working-men—it will be asked, how are they to find time and place for worship? If their present condition were final, there would be no help for it but to confess that our boasted brotherhood is a dream and must be condemned as an impossibility. We have sown the wind,

as has been said, and may have to reap the whirlwind, but perhaps the poor are not to be for ever left sweltering in fever dens. Perhaps there is to be some limit placed on those who make fortunes out of filthy courts and rotten staircases. Hours of work too are shortening and tend to shorten, as the skill of man learns to wield more successfully and easily, the powers of nature. Artisans are not different to other men. They have the same longings, the same spiritual wants, the same "innatureable basis of the religious sentiment" in their move as others. And they, like others, can find rest only in the Divine revelation of *the One better than the best they can conceive*, the Heaven-Father. Is it too good a thing to hope, that with increasing leisure they will find time and place to gather their children together in worship of Him after whom they yearn; in loyalty to him who is a head of a brotherhood, wide as the world and lasting as eternity?

In thus extolling the value of family worship, it may be thought by some that a great deal is being made of nothing; that what is put forward as a remedy for the evils of the age is an every-day custom of the "religious world." What God hath cleansed let us not call common. He offers us His one eternal gospel of Father and Son, to meet the evils of this and every other age. We may turn it into a relation between a tyrant and his slaves, thus deepening the class differences among us, or we may accept its

blessed revelations of brotherhood and oneness with the Father, and so draw closer to each other and to Him, and if we do so, our home worship will be a new fountain of life and righteousness for the individual and the nation.

Worship in the family can never detract from public worship or lessen its importance. Let the conception of Jesus once be returned to, once be grasped in home life, and it will be inevitable that a national worship becomes the nation's highest glory. Men will "go up to the Tabernacle of the Lord of Hosts to worship," *when they have learned to worship, "every man, in the door of his own tent."*

THE GOSPEL OF SORROW.

SINCE ever the thoughts of man have been known to us, they have been busy with "the mystery of evil." Pain and suffering, disease and death, have formed the walls of a prison-house against which humanity has dashed itself in vain attempt at extrication and in which it has often laid down, to curse God and die. Wherever we hear the articulate voice of man's religion,—Worship,—there are in it the undertones of sorrow, these undertones being generally loud and strong enough to destroy its harmony. From the great heart of humanity, there goes up for ever to the Eternal, the wail, "deliver us from the evil one." It is now and again only that we catch the triumphant ascription of praise, "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever."

That it should be so cannot be matter for surprise, remembering how unfaithful man has been to the Divine revelation. The revelation he could drive away from him, but it was different with Sorrow; that was always with him; his bed-fellow and playmate, from whom he could not part company; beside him from the first consciousness of infancy till

the moment when his eyes closed upon the seen and temporal. It harassed him in a thousand forms ; slow torturing diseases, the infliction of imaginary, unseen tyrants, and injustice, violence and slavery, the work of visible monsters.

What was there to set against it all, except a half-deadened consciousness, but with life enough to assert itself, of One better than the best man could conceive ? There must be some one who *could* deliver, if he would. But all went on as though he heard not, and mankind, separated by a thousand tongues, were one in a great bond of sorrow. Despots and persecutors came and went. The blood of slaves cemented the mortar for the monument of their master's infamy, but the divine right of kings did not exempt them from the wrongs of humanity, and priestly caste could neither destroy nor check the world-wide communism of sorrow.

Whence came it all ? why should it all be ?—was the problem that seemed put to humanity, and each generation tried an answer, which was so obviously the wrong one, that at last the problem became a *mystery*. To this day, philosophers, poets, statesmen, and theologians, are discussing it and trying to make their explanation intelligible either to themselves or some one else. Now and again there is a cry that the mystery is solved, and men read and eagerly question the revelation of a Mr Matthew Arnold, or Mr Herbert Spencer ; but when

tried by experience, neither the new gospel of the one nor the new apocalypse of the other, prove the real solution. The mystery of evil shrouds men's spirits even when they have given up belief in the miracles, or inoculated themselves with "the enthusiasm of humanity." The question meets us at our English firesides, just as it met men in the fire-temples of the Magi, or amid the refined sensuousness of Greece. As supposed revelations are made in these days, we seem to hear again the voices of the Matthew Arnolds, and Spencers and Mills of the past. We recognise the old-world fallacies—dual government, limitation of the power of the demiurgus,—the inherence of evil in matter,—the necessity urging on the Deity,—the absoluteness of His decree, all these spectres, assuming nineteenth century forms and masks, astonish or frighten men, as of yore.

Nay, they enter even into the explanations of our religious teachers. "The truth is," says one of them, "that the world is a great machine, which moves and works according to definite and ascertained laws. But the moment you have laws of order and movement, you have the possibility of disaster. Can I, when the noble and brave and wise have been suddenly lost from the world, and the world become so much poorer, can I easily believe that it is a good thing? I cannot see now that it is for the best, and I will not say I see, because men tell me it is religious to do so. When the things against which tender and

true hearts have prayed come to pass, there is a strain upon human faith; there is a still small voice of atheism in the heart, which says to him who is bewildered and amazed,—can there be a God?"

Such is the solution of the mystery of evil, offered by a deservedly popular preacher on the Sunday, to men and women who during the week have been taught on this wise, by an undeservedly popular newspaper, "To those who see life clearly and see it as a whole, what can life be, but, for the enormous majority of men and women who are born and die, an unutterably melancholy business? And after death, what?" Here is the old unrest of the world, the old complaining, and there is the latest and most approved answer to it,—“the world is a great machine, and you must be content with a possibility of disaster.”

Humanity will not take the answer, for wearied as it is with the mystery of evil, it has somehow become possessed of a confidence that in the end the riddle is to be read aright, the mystery is to be solved. Evil is for time,—goodness is unchanging and eternal. Ahriman will be conquered by Ormuzd,—darkness and sin will give place to light and holiness. This is the inspiring thought of the great Aryan prophets, and it is the triumph-note which closes the apocalyptic vision in the Christian Scriptures. In the past, no less than in the present, we find ourselves face to face, not merely with evil, but with an ever-recurring protest against evil; with the expressed consciousness

that there does exist a power to conquer it. Amid the wreck of dynasties and nations, between the living and the dying, in the face of brutal tyranny seeking to satiate itself with the blood of its victims, the true seer of whatever race or creed, he who has looked up through the mists of this material world, whether to the Shining One, the Strong One, or to the Heaven-Father,—has cheered his fellows with the fearless assurance of the triumph of eternal righteousness, of rest in union with the *One better than the best conceivable*. From whence came this conviction, will be intelligible to those who accept a Divine revelation; meantime note must be taken of it as a persistent consciousness, and therefore, according to Mr Herbert Spencer, a reality; a reality, moreover, if the "World" newspaper is to be believed, which must be identified with an unutterably melancholy race of beings. While however the confident expectation of the solution presents itself as a reality identified with the race, the mystery itself remains for the time unsolved. "Whether God is the author of evil, or whether that is the work of the devil," is a battle field on which missiles are freely used against each other by Calvinists, Savants, Sadducees, and advanced Theologians.

But if it be true that Jesus is the revealer of mysteries,—the one solitary, living answer to the questions and the yearnings of humanity,—this mystery of evil ought to have been cleared up by him. His life has been held to be the great

objective revelation of the Father-hood of God, through ideal and perfect sonship. The growing conformity of each individual life to his, has been shewn to be the one only way of communion with the Father; its perfection has been looked forward to, as the endless bliss of the hereafter. But how is that communion to be won or perfected, while the mystery of evil haunts the seen and the unseen? The gospel of the Father and the Son has been set forth as the good news for the whole family of God on earth; but how does it deserve the name of gospel, if it does not clear away the darkness from before us, if it does not come with the key to the world's mystery, if it does not give assurance to the universal longing of the race for the victory of the good?

As God's free children, we have *rights* no less than duties. As united in the eternal sonship, we may boldly claim to be lifted far enough to view the mystery of evil from its eternal and heavenly side. Men have studied it from their own point of view; they have looked up at evil and let its chilling shadow come between them and their Father's face. What if they could look at it from where the angels see it? What if they, the sons of God, could but think of it as did the perfected Son? What, if instead of gazing up at dark clouds, they could look down upon them, and behold them dazzling in the light of our Father's love? "Soon should they read the mystery right, in the full sunshine of His smile."

Simplicity,—the Divine Letters Patent of greatness—is the distinguishing mark of the true revelation. At the very threshold of the kingdom of heaven, there stands a little child, and it is matter of fact, not of opinion; it can be proved by every-day experience, and needs therefore neither miracle nor unimpeached text to support it, that into that kingdom we cannot enter except as little children. Back to the simplicity of the revelation, it is worth while for the world to go, if it would read aright the mystery of the ages and be free from the unrest of ill-expressed longings. And if after all it should prove that this revelation, claimed to be a direct message from God to man, made at the first, through the religious sense, and confirmed for ever in the objective revelation of eternal sonship,—if it should prove that this revelation leaves the mystery of evil where it was, or explains it only on the principle of some unsympathetic mechanism,—then away with it! Let us resign ourselves to life as to an unutterably melancholy business, brightened only by the hope that death and not life may be the common and everlasting fate.

II.

Before putting to the test the Divine revelation, by demanding of it an explanation of the mystery of evil, a clear meaning must be attached to the word itself, for there is no more fruitful source of mystery

than misunderstandings, half, if not the whole of our daily difficulties in fact arising out of them. The term evil, popularly rendered, signifies phenomena physical or moral which are attended with pain or inconvenience to self. Among the former, are the thousand ills that flesh is heir to, and the accidents and calamities which devastate the world. The latter covers all those actions which we call sin, and by which term all who accept a Divine revelation,—any direct message from God to man,—mean, a deliberate and free refusal to obey the voice of that revelation ; the deliberate and free choice of self-will, in place of the expressed will of One above self.

Clearly distinct as these two conceptions are, there has been always a tendency to confuse them ; to make the first group the necessary consequence of the second, as is instanced by the chronicler who wrote of Wycliffe, when he lay dying on the 29th of December 1384, "it was the rightful doom of God, for he was struck with palsy on St Thomas a Beckett's day and he died on St Sylvester's day, both saints he had treated with contempt." Indeed, no sooner does the sound of man's religion reach us, than this confusion is already identified with it. In the Persian creed, the mystery of evil was the work of Ahriman, *the sinful-minded*. In the Hebrew writings, the introduction of evil into the world is supposed to have been the direct punishment of one man's sin ; so that, from the first, Aryan and Semitic thought

express the fallacy so plainly rebuked by Jesus when asked, "Master who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

This world-wide connection between evil and sin, the one the effect of the other; between acts felt to be at variance with *the better than the best conceivable* and phenomena of suffering, supposed to be the distinct punishment of such acts, has an important bearing on the question of a Divine revelation.

The Sadducees having at length evolved all life out of an original germ, are guessing that conscience is the product of a careful observation on opposite courses of conduct, by the human proceeds of the original germ. And if in the original germ there be granted a germinal conscience, or in more strict language, the tendency to remark on opposite courses of conduct, if, adopting Mr Darwin's definition, we regard Conscience as "the faculty of comparing past and future actions or motives and of approving or disapproving of them," then science, if one may venture to say so, is in this matter making much ado about nothing. It is only enforcing on us the lesson, that a very great deal of the evil of life may be got rid of by the accumulated experience of humanity; and to this accumulated experience it gives the name (by way of confusing simple people) of Conscience.

Men love themselves, and their social instincts guided by accumulated experience, lead them to abstain from certain acts against a visible order, lest

that order should revenge itself upon them; but whence the conviction, that it is an evil thing and a bitter, to sin against an invisible order, against *One better than the best conceivable?* If, as Mr Matthew Arnold thinks, righteousness always *paid*, if it always brought to the doer of it the thing that he desired, then the animal instinct, aided by the Darwinian conscience, should prove a sufficient power to overcome evil. But it is impossible, except when pleading for a theory, to do anything but admit with Butler, that "pleasure and pain are indeed to a certain degree, say to a very high degree, distributed amongst us *without any apparent regard to the merit or demerit of character*, and that, were nothing else concerning the matter discernible in the constitution and course of nature, there would be no ground to hope or fear that men would be rewarded or punished hereafter." The world's history is in truth so confused a chapter of light and darkness, of joy and sorrow, that accumulated experience can do little more than share the confusion. It sees the years come and go. Slaves cower in the dust. Tyrants sit in high places, and no unseen hand is stretched out to rescue the one, or to punish the other. Glaring acts of infamy bring, not condign punishment, but actual prosperity. Convulsions of nature strike down alike the innocent and guilty, and set in the midst of these bewildering facts, Conscience, in the Sadducean sense, cannot possibly throw any light on the supposed connection between sin and

sorrow, and is hopelessly silent, when asked for an explanation of the mystery of either of them.

True, it might have been fairly expected that the conscience of the race would by this time have materially lessened the evils of life, for the greatest intellects have been given up to the question, the purest souls have been occupied with it, and there is the recorded wisdom of three thousand years to guide us. In the system of the founder of Buddhism were four principles,—the existence of pain; the production of pain; the annihilation of pain; and the means of its annihilation. Sakyamuni lived six hundred years before Christ, and yet, after this long interval we have to confess that there is more pain in the world than when the gospel of annihilation was preached; not merely more pain collectively as the result of a larger population, but a greater and more intense degree of pain to the individual. If we are to believe the new philosophy, humanity has for these thousands of years past been perfecting itself; its conscience from continued use has been growing stronger, and yet our original instinct has its own will over us. As we become more highly civilized, we “shame the boast so often made that we are wiser than our sires,” by crowding into cities and turning night into day, in the search after social advancement. Our original instincts allow us to sow the seeds of pain and death below our very houses; to nourish breeding dens of suffering within a stone’s-throw of our

palaces. The poor are maddened by adulterated abominations, die, and are hurried out of sight, while this accumulated experience of humanity, this Conscience, this perfected thing, draws back its garment hem for fear of defilement. Can it be that evil is for ever to dog our footsteps? What if it should prove to be but the shadow, and the proportionate one, of our boasted civilization?

Of efforts to lessen evil, to relieve pain, the number, thank God, does grow apace, but for these our original instincts can only get credit to a small extent. They may fairly enough claim those acts of mercy which spring from sentiment and are often disastrous in their consequences, increasing the very evils they are supposed to check; as for example, indiscriminate alms-giving and the like; but the higher, nobler attempts of pity and tenderness towards suffering, spring not from man's original instincts, but from that religious sense which is ever in opposition to animal instincts, which is no sentimental feeling of distress at the sight of suffering such as may be shewn by the mere animal, but the natural outcome of *The communism of Jesus*, "forasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." Philosophers may complain of our judging of what humanity can do, from the trifling specimen of four thousand years; for they mark the advance of the race by æons not ages, and may urge that before the perfected humanity is arrived at, our times

will be more unhistoric than are now the days of the stone implements. But so long as humanity is itself, so long will it be in the leading strings of its guiding instinct, love of self, which having in it of the very nature of pain, must keep the race for ever subject thereto. As far then as has been seen of it, the scientific Conscience, the accumulated experience of the race, can do no more than testify to the existence of physical evil, protest against and make some effort to lessen it.

But notwithstanding that man's accumulated experience has done little so far, beyond sharing in the confusion which has marked the progress of history, there has never ceased to assert itself a world-wide belief in some inevitable connection between sin and sorrow. The notion of retribution here or hereafter has never been enforced more powerfully, than when there seemed no help for the oppressed, and since this belief is against the accumulated experience of man, it could not have sprung from out of it; for its origin, therefore, recourse must be had elsewhere. That the belief was a partly erroneous one, matters nothing. Man's misconception of the Divine meaning; man's failure to realize the Divine ideal, is the epitome of the religious history of the world, but the very misconception points to the thing conceived; the yearning after such an ideal as *One better than the best conceivable* springs out of a primeval revelation.

The enquiry into the mystery of evil is simplified by keeping in mind what is an obvious fact, but a fact seldom fully and fairly admitted, that the great proportion of human suffering is *self-inflicted*. It is no wonder if, when ascribing to the Eternal all the hideous total of earthly sorrow and suffering, the greatest minds should have been overcome by the mystery. But disease and pain are aberrations from a normal state of things. We are still so afraid of what is called interfering with the liberty of the subject, that meantime, sanitary legislation can hardly hope to save more than one in fifty of the population, yet that would represent an annual saving of forty thousand lives and the prevention of sickness, pain and misery, to one million persons in each year. The question was put lately to some of the most eminent medical men in London,—“What proportion of the suffering of mankind does man owe to man?” The answers given were, “sixty,”—“seventy,”—“eighty” per cent. One, more epigrammatic than the others, was *all*, so that to question the love and goodness of God because of this, say, seventy per cent. of human suffering, is, on the part of scientific men and philosophers at any rate, unreasonable, for they themselves are always telling of the majesty of unchanging law and asking our admiration of the relentless sway of the forces of nature.

If a man should touch a heavily loaded Leyden jar and be killed by the shock, the man would be

blamed and not electricity, but if another should take refuge under a tree in a thunderstorm and be destroyed by lightning, immediate questions are raised about God's benevolence, and the verdict, "died by visitation of God," formulates the popular superstition. It is a law of our being that no physical material can stand more than a given amount of wear, and we are not foolish enough to blame the upholsterer, because carpets do not last for ever ; but if a ship put to sea with an iron plate so thin that a blow from rock or wave will force it in ; if, guided by the original animal instinct, love of self, a railway director, greedy of gain, sends off a train with half worn-out tyres on the wheel,—distrust of the goodness of God is awakened by some awful accident, by which "the noble, the brave and the wise, are suddenly lost from the world." It is of the constitution of our nature, that mental work exhausts the tissues of the brain ; but, if an over-wrought pointsman on a railroad loses through fatigue his self-possession or power of watchfulness, it is the love of God which is called in question, because "the things against which tender and true hearts have fervently prayed, come to pass." The same "still small voice of Atheism" is heard, when the man of business in the search after wealth, or the student, in the thirst for knowledge, wears out his brain tissue with sleepless hours, or when the devotee of fashion loses health and hope. Yet how is all this suffering to be prevented, except by God's direct and

perpetual interference, which of course no one professing to be in the least degree scientific, would tolerate for a moment! Three of the most terrible calamities of the year which have set many people asking "Can there be a God?" have been explained as follows: "In Somersetshire the farmhouses and cottages of the district appear to have been planted down anywhere, and scores will have to be abandoned. One hundred and fifty families are homeless, the poorest of the poor. Two hundred families are still living in flooded houses. Some, in dwellings far away, are in danger of starving. Nature has turned the district into a series of marshes, which man reclaimed, *but has become too lazy to maintain.* The result of the divided authority is *chaos*; the walls are left to rot. *These walls are damaged wilfully, being broken through, that the water from another district may spread itself and become shallower.*"*

"It turns out however, after full enquiry, that the case is but one more illustration of the almost uniform lesson of railway 'accidents,' so called. *It proves, that strictly speaking there was nothing whatever accidental in the matter. On the Company, rests the whole blame of the accident, which in point of fact was no accident at all.*"†

"If the explosion last August at the Patent Gunpowder Company's Works is not to be called an

* The *Western Morning News*, 16th Jan. 1877.

† The *Times*, 6th Jan. 1877, on the Arsley accident.

accident,—and we have authority for refusing so to term it,—what name are we to give to it? and what name are we to give to the other more fatal explosion on the high seas beyond Cape Finisterre? The *Great Queensland*, from the moment she completed her loading at the powder buoy off Gravesend, would seem to have been a doomed ship. Her fate was a mere question of time dependent on such chances as the heat of the weather, and the extent to which the powder she took on board was already decomposed. *That she should ever reach Melbourne was from the first all but impossible.** *

The laws of nature, as we call them, are records of the same ever-recurring phenomena. Fruit follows the flower, man succeeds to the infant. We do not quarrel with these changes, nay, we see a fitness in them, but when a change comes offensive to our animal instincts, when death parts us for a little moment from those we love, upon whom, as we say, we were dependent for our happiness, (mark the expression,) then “the still small voice of Atheism” becomes a loud wail against the goodness of God, or an affected astonishment at His so-called mysterious providence. The friends whom we mourn with an ill regulated morbid grief, put to shame by men of creeds unblest with the full assurance of our own,

* *The Times*, 23d July 1877. The opinion thus given has been fully confirmed by the Report of the Commissioners.

The Indian Famine will furnish to some future writer on the present subject a more forcible illustration even than the above.

cannot be lost to us. Nothing is really lost, save what we have ceased to love. Our loved ones were a power in our lives, and death cannot destroy it. Yet we, the children of the resurrection, deal with our friends who are gone, as the churches have dealt with their Christ. There goes up from their many voices the sad chaunt,—“O death in life!” whereas “O life in death!” is the triumph shout of the ideal, the risen son.

The popular difficulties about God's goodness and omnipotence, which arise (as they did in Mill's case,) from dwelling on the pain and misery of humanity, will be found to take their origin in an unexpressed but very real belief, that joy and pleasure are ours *by right* and that every pang of sorrow and disappointment, is a piece of injustice or cruelty inflicted on us by some power not ourselves. Herein is fresh illustration of that selfish idea prevailing prayer, which in a previous chapter was contrasted with Christ's ideal, and hereout have sprung those everlastingly recurring falsifications of the Divine revelation, which have installed a pedagogue or a tyrant in the place of our Father.

Man is the author of seventy per cent. of the troubles which afflict him. Of the remaining thirty (if in it be reckoned those seemingly destructive phenomena of nature, over which man has not direct control), how much may be *over-ruled* to his own purposes by increasing enterprise and knowledge? Storms, which

in times past were terrors to be prayed against, now sweep more quickly along his way the mariner, whose skill has furnished him with the means to avail of them. Often too, in cases where eternal love or omnipotence is blamed for the loss of life and property which follows earthquake or eruption, it will be found that men have become so familiar with these things as to despise their warnings. On the very spot destroyed more than once before, men build again, eat and drink, marry and give in marriage, until the fiery floods sweep them away. To all save the superstitious (who, distorting the Divine revelation, have learnt to tremble before the One above them),

“His lightnings, glancing through the gloom,
To faith's raised eye, as calm and lovely come,
As splendours of the autumnal evening star,
As roses, shaken by the zephyr's plume,
When like cool incense comes the dewy air,
And on the golden west, the sunset burns afar.”

Looking then, to the question of *physical evil* alone, it appears that the great bulk of it is self-inflicted; that if a given cause is to produce a uniform effect, the sins of the fathers must be visited on the children; that it rests with man to do away with altogether or at any rate to reduce to a minimum, the load of physical evil from which the race suffers, and these things being so, it is neither just, philosophical, nor religious, to complain of mystery in that residue of evil, which as yet we cannot fully understand or trace to its source.

III.

If in dealing with physical evil we have at times felt hopelessly in the dark ; unable for the moment to realise that the pain and anguish which was wearing away the form of some loved one, was of man's doing, not God's, it must be confessed that we seem to step forth into the very darkness of night, when the source of *moral evil* is sought for. The sin that is in the world, how comes it and why ? If God be omnipotent, why does He suffer it ? If He be not so, who or what shares His power ?

The difficulty has been thus expressed, "pain and death perhaps, sin certainly, must always remain an unsolved riddle for us. If we could believe that the supreme good is not omnipotent, a solution would be possible ; or, if we could believe that the omnipotent is not supremely good, that would be also a solution ; or, if we could believe that sin is not evil and not against God's will, a third solution would be open to us. But, as we can believe none of these things, as we must hold fast to the faith that God is supremely good and also supremely powerful, and that He hates sin, and yet that sin is in the world, we are shewn at once by our own confession to be illogical." *

The revelation made to man through his religious sense, was—so it has been maintained,—a disclosure of his relationship with the Unseen. It was a *Father*,

* Abbott's "Cambridge Sermons," p. 6.

who was concealed in the meantime. The objective form of the revelation, its final setting forth, was the life of the ideal son,—the manifestation of perfect union between the Father and the Son, in the exercise of infinite love on the one part, and of childlike trust and free obedience, on the other. The yearning after that union and relationship, the expression of man's right to it, no less than his delight in it, found its voice in the ceaseless worship of the human family, claiming its inheritance of oneness with the Divine.

But the triumph notes of worship were too often drowned by the tones of sorrow ; there was something for ever interfering with the full and free voice, and to that something, because it, as it were, *choked* man and prevented his free speech with the Eternal, our Aryan fore-fathers gave the name of *sin*. As so often happens, light is let in on an idea by studying the significance of the word used to convey it, and this term, sin, implying interference with the power to articulate is a witness of language to man's channel of communion with the One above him.

This difficulty in articulation, this sense of suffocation, necessarily pained the higher nature of man, causing the sadness which marked his worship. Instead of being the outpouring of child-like love and reverence, his voice became the vehicle of a ceaseless litany, a succession of prayers for deliverance from evil. And just as in the case of physical evil, man had accustomed himself to lay the blame

upon God, it did not take him long, under the influence of his original instinct, the love of self, to delude himself into the belief that God was the author of this separation, (this sin as man called it,) when it was in reality his own cowardice that prevented him claiming a Father's full forgiveness, the sense of which could alone restore to him the communion necessary for his spirit's life.

But in the fact that sin,—that is, separation from God, the inability to commune with Him,—is in itself pain and suffering to man's higher nature, there is the answer to the calumny which has been spread against our Father, there is the clue to the mystery of moral evil. For the keenness which accompanies sorrow for sin, which indeed makes it unendurable, is *self-reproach*. Self-reproach is the key-note of the confessions of humanity; but if God were the author of sin, then man's words of self-humiliation and shame should have been rather expressions of abhorrence at God's monstrous injustice. Man's confession of his own unworthiness should have been the querulous interrogation, "Why hast thou made me thus?" So far however from this being the case, the history of religion is an admission that for his helplessness to commune with God, man has to complain, not of God's injustice, but of his own deeds, which had brought evil upon him and saddened his heart with the sense of separation. Even when forgetting the Divine revelation he has turned its simplicity into schemes

of salvation and vicarious sufferings, man has shewn himself possessed of the truth, in some form or other. The gospel of the Father and the Son bases all upon this truth, for it sets forth that sin is wilful disobedience to the will of our Father, known to us His children, and which in virtue of the Divine spirit in us, we are intended perfectly to obey. Deny that gospel, accept the materialist theory of life, and sin ceases to exist; man has to grope his way through the enigmas of life, with those sorry guides his animal instincts, love of self and love of offspring.

Science deserves thanks for pointing out as it has done, the importance of these two instincts. They do not account for the religious sense in man, for from the first they are found struggling against it. The worship of the One above self is the protest of the race against love of self, and the love of offspring has been, among races civilised and barbarous, held to be subservient to the homage due by self to the "not ourselves," to whom has been offered the fruit of the body in hope of expiating the sin of the soul, and thus, in the admission of something overruling animal instincts, has mankind unknowingly figured forth that overwhelming proof of the divine Fatherhood, which spared not his own Son.

If these two instincts are, as science tells us original; if they are coeval with, or if it please science, anterior to the religious sense, then a flood of light is let in on the mystery of evil. There ceases

to be the need of *a creation* of moral evil, for moral evil is seen to be but the struggle between the animal instincts and the Divine nature. An unavoidable struggle, moreover. Had no religious sense been given, man had not known sin, but like the brute creation round him, would have been left to the guidance to which some philosophers are anxious to remit him. But the Divine revelation of One better than self, gave him aspirations which, as a mere animal, he never could have had. And *the aspiration*, after *One better than the best he could conceive*, was *a power* to grow like unto Him. With the gift therefore, man's responsibility became a thing of necessity. Sin, being the deliberate choice of the worse for the better,—of the animal for the Divine,—must needs cause the sense of separation which was man's keenest sorrow. But none the less needful was it, that the choice should be left with man. If he were to be partaker in the Divine spirit, which alone could perfect his oneness with the unseen and eternal, he could be partaker but on one condition ; that he should share it, in its integrity, in its perfection, with its aspiration *and therefore with its power to be true to its ideal*. So was it, that the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope."

The question for us is,—is not this assured freedom worth all present subjection? To be "subjected in hope," what but this forms the happiness of the child?

As heretofore then in our claims for the truth of a Divine revelation, so now, appeal can be made to every-day experience. Amid our common sacraments of salvation, at the home fireside, men may try the value of God's revelation. Is there one who, if he could have the guiding of his own life from the beginning, would choose the liberty of the brute, rather than the loving and perpetual restraint to which a child is subject? Is there a man who, of his deliberate will, would ask to be a conscious automaton; a mere animal, with no aspiration after a better than the best conceivable; with no certainty of reaching it by a daily battle against the brute instinct which is contending with the Divine Spirit. Yet if man is to have a higher nature; if he is to have fellowship in brotherhood with the ideal son; oneness of spirit with *One better than the best he can conceive*,—he must have it on the one only condition under which it is possible for him to have it. For a time he must be subject to vanity, that is, emptiness,—the emptiness which causes the yearning of an immortal spirit for that which no animal instinct, be it primeval or developed, can supply; which the Divine and nothing but the Divine can fill. Neither in the all Divine, nor the all animal nature, can sin exist, but when to the one there is made a manifestation of the other, a Divine power and therefore a power of free action, of deliberate choice is bestowed. Thus, to the seeming paradox that God is omnipotent and man is free,

the Divine revelation of Father and Son furnishes the answer,—that the son, in so far as he partakes the Father's nature, must be partaker of its power.

Just herein is the strength which the revelation gives mankind, to be true to it. That the better than the best conceivable was "our Father" had been apprehended of man, yet the way unto Him was dark, until that perfected disclosure of it,—the life of Jesus ; perfected, because as the setting forth of the Divine revelation objectively, *it made manifest* a power to attain communion with the Eternal. Theology, which is the Netherlands of Religion, where the river of the Water of Life is forced into the quaintly formed channels of man's devising, has only half comprehended the glory of the Divine revelation. It has told men much of their duties as sons of the Most High, it has threatened endless torture if the duties are neglected ; but it has very imperfectly made us enter into and grasp our nobleness, as heirs of the future and inheritors of the kingdom. It does not suit ecclesiastical systems, that God and man should be, in the simplest most natural way, Father and son, and so the truth is concealed in occult and metaphysical language, and priestly mediation becomes a necessity.

Are we really in the dilemma in which Dr Abbott leaves us? Can we not, without being unreasonable, not to say illogical (because it is not everything reasonable which can be put in syllogistic

form) can we not, without being 'unreasonable, "hold fast to the faith that God is supremely good and also supremely powerful, and that He hates sin and yet that sin is in the world?"

The objective revelation of God, the Life of Jesus, will, if our claims for it be true, set us free from the bondage of unreasonableness. With our perfected brother, the animal instinct was "the adversary." To him, the Prince of the apostles was as truly Satan as were the suggestions of self-aggrandisement that came thronging round him in the darkening solitude of the desert. "Thou savourest not the things which be of God, but the things which be of men;" was the judgment and the condemnation. Satan, like lightning, was seen to fall from heaven when the seventy, who had accepted the mission of self-renunciation—to follow the Teacher whithersoever he went—returned with joy. It was not theirs to rejoice, because the demons in men submitted to the teaching and power of the ideal Son, but it was theirs to be exceeding glad, because their surrender of self had given them eternal fellowship with the One above self, because "their names were written in Heaven." Self-love is—God knoweth—Satan enough for us; an adversary with whom we must struggle to our lives' end. No need to quarrel with orthodoxy, if it pictures to itself our adversary the devil going about as a spiritual personalty, a roaring lion, but every reason to complain, when the Church bedecks its

fancy caught from Eastern thought, with the authority of a literal translation of the words of Jesus and lands us in this dilemma about moral evil, making it proof of the unreasonableness of the Divine revelation. That a perfected spiritual nature should have been suffered by Divine Fatherhood to sink into the Miltonic devil, or the Mephistopheles of Goethe, may well be a mystery; but to those whose only infallible authority is the life of the Son of God, there is neither mystery nor want of reason in the struggles of the two natures in man; no difficulty in ascertaining who is the adversary to the growth of the spiritual and higher aspirations.

The revelation thus understood neither lessens the sinfulness of sin nor the power of the Eternal Father, who in His earthly sacraments of home, would fain make us understand how failure is the parent of success, and every fall may be made an upward step toward the ideal. All education is but a stumbling forward in the direction of a distant goal. Our life's duty, the work of God, is loyalty to him whom he hath sent, a loyalty perfected only by godly sorrow, which works a repentance not to be repented of. If to us who teach children, their mistakes are often positively painful; if their yielding to the instincts of the animal nature, while the Divine voice is calling to them, is cause for anxious thought and prayer; if no one is fitted to deal with children, who has not, as we say, unlimited forbearance, are we not brought

thus to the threshold of that "infinite patience with these wayward souls of ours," in presence of which we can only wonder and adore?

The preacher's dilemma resolves itself into the question, why was not man made perfect? to which the revelation answers, *he was made perfect—as an animal*; but when to him came the revelation of One above himself, when there was breathed into him the Spirit of God, he became a living soul, with the aspirations and the powers of the spirit which had quickened him. From that moment war was declared; the lower nature became not a thing sinful in itself, but an adversary, a tempter, savouring of the things of men rather than of those of God. Dr Abbott finds a solution of the mystery of evil, if we could say that sin is not evil, and not against God's will, but the language is confusing because of the ambiguity of the word "Evil." Men know that sin is evil, from the fact that it checks their communion with *One better than the best they can conceive*, and they know also that sin is against God's will—if by that is meant, that sin is the choice of self-will in place of God's will; but if the words that sin is against God's will, be taken to mean that the daily struggle between self and the above self, be a struggle which the Eternal One *would have desired should not exist*, then it is time to part company with orthodoxy and combat this disguised Manicheism, with the gospel of the Divine glory of Sorrow. For, it

is in the struggle, or rather in the end of the struggle, between the Divine and the animal in man, that that glory shineth most exceedingly. At the very moment when it would almost seem as if the victory were lost—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"—there comes the final throbbing of Divine impulse, and amid a wracking birth agony, springs forth the conqueror, the mighty man-child of Divine sorrow, the perfected one of the revelation of God, who sets his heel on the neck of sin and evil, not with the shout of earthly victors but with the truer note of triumph, the fainting, panting words of ideal and perfected sonship—"Father, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

To us, the hatefulness of sin consists in the nature of the sinful action; we step out of the way of the despised city harlot, to take the arm of the respected city man, who has ruined thousands with his lying prospectus; but if we look at sin as did the ideal Son, we must regard the source of the action, rather than its outward manifestation. The Christ suffered the harlot to bathe his feet, while he spurned the religious teachers as the brood of hell. His Divine love for all men was equal; he could not but have felt a loathing for the acts of the woman to whom he said "thy sins are forgiven thee;" he could not but have had love for the men whom he scathed with his sarcasm. It was the spirit, the hidden spring of action, which he detected in both cases; the contest which he

recognised, was between the Satan and the Divine Spirit ; the contest which goes on in our own hearts, between self-exaltation and self-surrender ; between the spirit of an adversary and the spirit of a Son.

In the blessed sacraments of home life, we are as regards Sorrow, no less than as regards Worship, at the very threshold of the wisdom, hidden from those who seek hither and thither for a sign.

For, in the education of children and the relationships of the family, Sorrow is manifested forth in all its Divine glory, and the mystery of evil becomes unravelled, in harmony with the revelation. Whoever faithfully accepts his or her position in the family as interpreter of the Divine, cannot fail to learn somewhat of the glory of sorrow.

Looking at it as it bears upon physical evil,—we shall verify in the bringing up of little ones, what has been said as to the amount of human suffering that is self-inflicted. By allowing children the free licence of their animal instincts, we may suffer them to grow up to be the curse of themselves and others ; by the neglect of the simple laws of nature, we may force in them the seeds of pain and premature death. We may, through loyalty to our own animal instincts, foster in our children vitiated tastes, which, if unchecked by sorrow, will lead to that nethermost hell, in which men are so often seen, where as if in very mockery of the thirst for the Divine which cannot leave them, they try to drug the religious sense with

draughts from which a mere brute would turn away in loathing.

And for ourselves, who that ever tries to make home what it ought to be, does not become aware how much of the evil which is to cause sorrow to his children, is the result of his own unregulated instincts, or failure to live up to the ideal which has been revealed to him? That his instincts are inherited, that his weakness of will results from the sin of his parents, does not alter the fact that his own readiness to yield, will make it the harder for his children to resist. Unless this were so, unless the simplicity of God were to give place to the cunning of men, unless special providences, vicarious schemes, plans of salvation, were to free men from the consequences of their actions, we should fail of knowing not only the glory of Sorrow, but what must now be considered for a moment, the meaning of the unexplained residue of evil and its purpose in the education of man.

In God's bright, cheery nursery of Home, the truth is forced upon us. What underlies all education worth the name? and by the term education is meant, not a smattering of science and so-called accomplishments, but the drawing out of the natural powers and the perfected control of them. What mean broken toys and rain on a holiday? Why are there cut fingers and broken heads? What are the tasks of school, and the sometimes enforced chastisement of parents? What have these things in view, but a strengthening

of the power of self-control by a higher power, and a deepening of that godly sorrow which needs not to be repented of? A sorrow that has nothing in common with the sorrow of the world which is self-contempt, or useless regret; nor with ecclesiastical sorrow, which comes, of the vivisection of the confessional. Godly sorrow must of necessity be a part of true education, for it works that repentance which is a turning away from the past to strive more faithfully after the ideal. *It is the proof of Sonship*, not the means by which Sonship is to be gained. No matter, whether to the child or to the man, the glory of Sorrow is, that it is an ever-lighted beacon for us, as we steer through a sometimes starless night over the waves of this troublesome world, to the haven of everlasting rest.

Or go into the city hospital, or into the room of some friend, who has been lying there these many years past in weary waiting for the light, and see beside the sufferer, those whose youth is passing away, as they do the angels' work. Within their hearts, maybe, there are depths of sorrow far greater than that of the one whose physical pain is so lovingly watched and cared for. There are hopes deferred, making the heart sick; there is the depression so apt to spring out of the atmosphere of a sick room: there is the passionate human longing to love and to be loved, while, as the world says, chances are slipping away. These watchers are like the orange-blossom,—

more fragrant as the light grows less,—these are they in whom the ideal is conqueror. O brethren and sisters of the Man of Sorrows! ye know not how brightly shines your light before men; ye know not how many a good thought is strengthened by your strength, how many a struggle after the higher, nobler life, owes its prompting to the sight of your sorrow. The truth of God needs martyrs now, as much as when the ideal Son witnessed to it, on the far side of Kedron's Brook, amid the shadows of the olives in Gethsemane.

Seek where we will, in our own hearts, or in the world around us, we shall find, that godly sorrow which leaves the dead past to bury its dead, *is a great educational force in man's nature*. Where it comes from our ignorance, or error about the things which are seen, it does its utmost to guard us against error in the future; where it is the far more bitter thing, a sense of loneliness and separation from Him who is as yet unseen, it offers to us the wings by which our spirit may be borne upward, into a nearer glimpse of that perfection after which we strive.

But if sorrow for ourselves be glorious, how much more doth exceed it in glory, the sorrow for the evil which is outside us in the world; for that is a power which when our own souls have been drawn heavenward, compels us to seek for all men that same blessedness, into which we ourselves have entered, through the dark arch-way beyond which shines the light of life.

Herein did the ideal son, as in all else, prove himself to be the completion of the revelation of God. Behold and see if there was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow! It is his fellowship with them in sorrow that has won the hearts of his brethren. With him the sorrow was not self-inflicted, for his animal instincts were ever kept in perfect subordination to the Divine nature, but his struggle against temptations, his sufferings from the suggestions of evil, must have been most unbearably awful; how awful, we may know, when the glory of sorrow has done its work in us, and our purified nature shall stand aghast at the very thought of sin. When sorrow shall have finished the great work of education in us, when through it we have proved our relationship to The Man of Sorrows; when with him we have entered into the promised inheritance and our rest has been consummated in oneness with the Father; then of necessity, must the Patmos vision be realized. Sorrow shall have fled away, but we shall remember it as a very tree of life, which bloomed for us awhile in the earthly paradise of God.

IV.

Before considering how the glory of sorrow may be made a real, a veritable glory over each one of us, it may be well to inquire how far the view of it which has been here urged, is in accordance with

the Christian writings, which treat of the completed revelation of God.

The words of Jesus are explicit, "Blessed are ye that mourn now, for ye shall weep and lament, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

St Paul says,—If we are children of God, we are His heirs and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. We glory in afflictions, because the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed in us, and the present lightness of our affliction is working for us, more and more exceedingly, an everlasting weight of glory. It was St Paul who positively gloried in infirmities; who took pleasure in them, because in them the power of Christ rested upon him. To him, all things were counted but refuse, if only he could be partaker of Christ's sufferings.

Other writers share his view,—one tells us, that it became Him, for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Prince of their salvation perfect through suffering, because He who sanctifies and they who are sanctified, are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Another counts them who have endured to be blessed, and bids men mourn and weep, that they may be exalted. By yet another writer, we are

reminded that Christ suffered for us, not (be it observed) to save us suffering, but to leave us an example that we should follow in his steps of suffering, and he bids us rejoice if we are partakers of Christ's sufferings, because that at the revelation of his glory, we shall rejoice with exceeding joy. And in the Apocalyptic vision, we seem to see those who have come out of great tribulation, standing star-crowned before the throne of the Eternal.

Thus, from the beginning to the end of the written gospel, is there the same conception of the glory of sorrow, the same appeal to it, as marked the revelation, made at the first through the religious sense, and proved true by the common experience of humanity. Finding it to be so,—finding, that in these books which have been so bitterly assailed of late, there is this divine principle of sorrow set up; that it is the crown, no less than the base, of the higher life in man, our faith may well stand the shock of attacks about authorship, or the exacter rendering of a passage. Let us search and look. Is there one, through whom we can understand the glory of sorrow? in whom we can know it, as the one necessary bond of fellowship with Him who has subjected the whole creation in hope? Is there one who has flooded the dark valley of humiliation with the light breaking through it from his revelation, that it leads right onward into the glorious liberty of the children of God? one who made the

hour of his deepest suffering the time of his triumph and perfecting, and who could appeal irresistibly to the heart of humanity, in that he suffered unto blood, striving against sin? Has there been one to make it manifest, that sorrow is the royal road to the eternal kingdom? that from a wreath of thorn branch may be woven a kingly crown? Has there been one who could show us death swallowed up of victory, and bid us listen for the songs of the unseen at the dark doorway of the grave? If there be such an one, to him may humanity come, and no less in harmony with the writings which Christendom holds sacred, than with the Divine revelation, given at the first, may exclaim,—“to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

V.

It is an easy thing and a natural, to recognise the glory of sorrow in great acts. We can look up to and admire the martyrs of science. We are stirred to our spirit's depth, when such a narrative as that of Livingstone is told. The grandeur of that sorrow is a spell, and our hearts go forth to the hero, as he laid himself down to die in a strange land, with his life's work so far as he could see it, unfinished, but yet with the spirit of the ideal son breathing in his last words,—“I don't know how the great loving Father will bring it all right at last, but He knows and he will do it.”

The danger is, lest we content ourselves with admiring the glory of sorrow, when it shines forth in the great deeds of others, but fail in making it shed its heavenly lustre on the little trials and, may be, the heavy and bitter losses which have to be encountered before we are perfected. In sad truth, the revelation of sonship, as the one only way to the Father, has become so obscured in these later days, that The Mystery of Evil has taken the place of The Divine glory of Sorrow. We have so utterly forgotten the truth, in the presentation of its counterfeits, as to be positively surprised, when sorrow comes to us ; actually astonished and aggrieved, when we are called to bear pain. Hence it is, that popular writers can win approval by describing life as an unutterably melancholy business, and hence that popular preachers can command sympathy, by apologising for "the still small voice of Atheism."

It is for us, the brethren and sisters of the Man of Sorrows, remembering what S. Augustin says,—“This law holds good in foul and accursed joy ; this in permitted and lawful joy ; this, in the veriest and purest perfection of friendship ; everywhere, the greater joy is ushered in by the greater pain,” to enter into and share the full glory of sorrow, even as did our perfected brother. He attained unto it and manifested it forth, in the one only way,—by union with the Divine, by complete submission of the “I” to the “Thou,”—by the offering of self to the One above self.

For us,—unless the revelation be a falsehood,—there are the same possibilities, nay, the same certainties, as there were for him. We must fail, if we assume that his sorrows are to save us from sorrow; if we fancy that his sufferings were designed to free us from suffering. That may be the teaching of some forms of Christianity, but it is foreign to the spirit of the Divine revelation. There have been great and grand faiths, which would fain have taught man to get rid of pain, or to school himself into bearing it without murmuring. The religion of Jesus,—the life of ideal sonship—gives man the reason and the power, not merely to bear tribulation, *but to glory in it*. For it sets forth Sorrow as *the condition on which the lower nature is raised into the Divine*; as the very essence of the yearning of the one, spite of itself, to be filled with the fulness of the other. Nor can sorrow cease to be, until the Divine nature shall have proved itself more than conqueror over the animal instincts in man; till the whole family is gathered in the many mansions of the eternal home,—saved, yet so as by fire,—each one, with a crown of sorrow, radiant as no eye of man has ever yet looked upon, and, by virtue of that crown, proving fellowship with him who, though a son, learnt obedience by the things which he suffered.

Once we have entered into the glory of sorrow, we shall find ourselves as in the cloud, upon the mount of Transfiguration; fearing as we enter into it, there will soon thrill through us, our Father's voice "this is

my beloved son." It is no idle dream that, though before it can be more than a dream to us, there are many popular habits of body and soul, which must be got rid of.

First,—as regards what we call physical evil. The troubles pressing on us must be lightened, by our prayers for the good things of life, changing into ceaseless thanksgiving for the every-day blessings which surround us; by the restless importuning for gifts becoming the utterance of ideal sonship to the Father,—“Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” There is one faculty, which may serve us in good stead, and herein find nobler occupation than in devouring sensational novels,—that faculty is *imagination*. To accept sorrow willingly, is to rob it of its sting, and this faculty of imagination can enable us to make friends with our troubles, before they come our way and knock at our door; that when they do come, we may welcome them, in the name of the ideal son who knew them all so well himself, and that going their way, their empty place may be filled by a peace that passes understanding. We must look trials in the face before they come to us, and take breath to rise upon them, instead of waiting to be overwhelmed by them. Most of us go full sail over the ocean of life, never thinking of the storms which are sure to sweep down on us. And then, when the tempest comes, and one stay after another is carried away, we crouch down in half-abstract terror (as you may see the

Arab sailor) with piteous gesture and wail of despair, to the Eternal.

On our loyalty to God's revelation of Fatherhood and Sonship, depends all. If we are true to it; if sorrow be accepted as *the proof* of our sonship, then we must greet, and not dread it. Not that human love and sympathy and feeling are to be trampled on, for they were keen enough in the ideal son, and we cannot follow in his steps, save by being perfectly human. But there is such a thing as glorying in infirmity, that the power of Christ may rest upon us. There is such a thing as filling up his sufferings on earth. To faithful souls is that glory given. To them, it is as a breeze from the everlasting hills, blowing away from before them some of the mists of sense, and letting them catch a glimpse of our Father's home. The great and noble, whose sorrows are a power over us, were called to witness to the truth of God's revelation, by great acts. Ours it is, in these days when material happiness sits in the very temple of God and exalts itself above all that is called God and is worshipped,—to meet this anti-Christ, by setting forth in the every-day round of duty, in the common routine of life's troubles,—the Divine glory of Sorrow. Now, more than ever, is it a duty, for these are times when the love of self is actually being put forth as a new gospel, and men are vieing with one another in self-indulgence, as if in emulation of the beasts that perish.

When we walk by the light of God's revelation about sorrow, we shall (mindful that physical evil is the work of man, and not of God,) not only have the power to deal with it, but the courage. Parents will understand, that on their own self-discipline depends the physical and moral welfare of those coming after them. The petting which now follows a scratched finger, will be turned into an encouragement to bear pain nobly and willingly. Children will no longer be brought up, in violation of the laws of health,—bodies and souls half ruined, that brain may be developed. Hospitals will be emptied, because of the reverence paid to God's sanitary laws, and penal legislation will become easy, as the virtues, instead of the vices of parents are strengthened in each succeeding race.

But what of that most awful thing—moral evil, Sin, the sense of separation from the *One better than the best conceivable*; the inability to commune with Him? That, so the revelation tells us, *is only for a time*. The creature waits to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The conflict will be over in the days that are coming, when faithfulness to the ideal shall be rewarded by its realization, and God shall be the all in all. The sorrow which comes with sin, blessed be God, must last awhile. Let us joyfully welcome it as the earnest of sonship, the pledge of the future and eternal victory of the Divine in us. For were the Divine to cease its struggle with us; were sin, which causes

our separation from the Father, no longer to cause disquiet and sorrow, we might well despair. But happily for us, the universal history of man's religion is proof certain of the ceaseless craving for oneness with the Divine, the expressed determination to have it; and the Fatherhood of God, comprehended by an ideal and perfected sonship, through the things which it suffers, would be meaningless, but that it can satisfy man and offer to him deliverance from self, in unbroken, ever-strengthening union with the Father.

Thus it is the crowning glory of sorrow, to be the angel which leads us, purified like him who went before us there, to the throne of the Eternal. On the road thitherward, it tells us :—

“ The longing for Him when thou seest Him not ;
The shame of self at thought of seeing Him,
Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.”

And whether here or elsewhere, we may be made *in all things* like unto him who was made perfect through suffering, the parting of our guardian angel from us will be,—

“ Farewell, but not for ever, brother dear ;
Be brave and patient on thy bed of sorrow.
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.”

THE GOSPEL OF WORK.

"CURSED be the ground, for thy sake; in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread," was the text of a sermon lately preached to a large congregation, who were gravely told to accept the trial of work, as a sad necessity, the punishment of their sins. No class was exempted from the universal curse, and the preacher made what he thought a point, by dwelling on the use of the word *in*, as proof that the curse was not on manual labour only, but that it covered the wide area of literary, professional, political and spiritual toil.

Nothing could more forcibly illustrate how the revelation has become obscured; obscured too, just in the same way as it was found to have been, when considering the meaning of Sorrow. Ease and comfort were grateful to the animal nature, and hence what was contrary thereto must come from One who was opposed to man, and who could find vent for His displeasure in inflicting the troubles of life. Similarly, the necessity for Work, the significance of which cannot be understood by the animal nature, must be the result of the curse of the Eternal One,—a punishment for sin. Hence it comes that a

religious teacher, seizing on a few words written by whom he knows not, positively turns upside down the revelation, puts darkness for light and bitter for sweet. Or at least, if the preacher be right, the revelation, as apprehended by the religious sense—as set forth objectively in the person of Jesus—must be wrong. “To preach the kingdom of God was I sent forth,” was said not sadly, as if a curse had to be fulfilled, but joyously, as with a growing realization of the blessedness of life; the finishing the work which had been appointed of the Father. With the ideal Son, work was the meat and drink of life, *it was proof of his relation to the Father*, because he said, “The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do,” and to have finished the work which had been given him, was a thought on which he could stay himself, as the sad end came on.

So too, with the first preachers of the revelation—Work with them was a glory not a curse. They were labourers together with God, and hence their sense of the dignity and nobleness of work. They were “stewards of the mysteries of God,” and it was required of stewards that a man be found faithful. They had been “called into God’s own kingdom and glory,” hence their study was, “to walk worthy of God, to do their business and work with their hands, yea, to labour night and day rather than be chargeable to any.” Avoiding those who were “busy about nothing, save being busybodies,” their anxiety was to

shew themselves approved unto God, workmen that needed not to be ashamed. And time would fail to tell of the mighty workmen who subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, who endured as seeing the invisible One ; or of the humbler, but no less hearty fellow-helpers with them, whose religion, pure and undefiled before God and the Father, was to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction. Suffice it to remember, that the gospel of the Fatherhood had taught them, "that God was not unrighteous to forget their work of love," for that they were a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people chosen for a possession, and that the gospel of the Son had added to those truths, this one, the gift of Jesus, the motto no less than meaning of his brotherhood, "he that abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, even as he walked."

Everywhere, in all time, Work has commended itself to the higher nature as a glory, and the hereafter has been contemplated, not as a state of base idleness, but grander activity ; for even Buddhism with its Nirvana, aimed at absorption into the Being of eternal causation, and years ago the same lesson was taught in England, where they said that "an idle monk's soul was lost." But what need to ask testimony from others, when we know for ourselves, that just as we rise out of and above the merely animal nature, so does a thirst increase and an aspiration intensify, which can be filled by work and by work only. As

the lower nature is stimulated into exertion by hunger, so the hunger and thirst after righteousness keeps in constant activity the higher nature of man. But between the two, is this difference, that the latter being boundless and without end, the activity, the love of work, in the spirit of man, must be eternal; for how otherwise would the revelation be true? He that cometh unto me shall never thirst, said the ideal and perfect son, because in the depth of his Divine nature shall there be rivers of water, flowing from the Eternal uncreate, *the better than the best he can conceive*; and to ascend those living waters, to go on through never-ending time, onward and ever upward toward their source, must be the blessedness of the hereafter, the work, which is the rest of the sons of God.

For it is only the exhaustion of tissue, which makes work distasteful to the animal. The tiger chases his food with pleasure, till fatigue makes him long for the lair in the jungle shade; the savage hastens joyfully to the hunt and the fishing ground. Going higher, we find our literary, artistic, and scientific tastes pursued with an enthusiasm which for a while can draw delight from out of exhaustion. With great ones, life without work is but a sphere for the exercise of resignation; how then must it be, when the mortal shall have put on immortality, when death shall have been swallowed up of life? When the aspiration to know, can be nourished without the exhaustion which limits it here; when *the thirst for the Divine*, shall

have changed into a *purely Divine thirst*—then shall come to pass the saying which is written, “death was swallowed up in victory.”

It must come to pass, if the gospel of the Father and the Son be true. If not only an individual, but an eternal relationship exist between each child and the Eternal Father who worketh even until now, we can enter into the vision of the seer, who, looking beyond the range of the visible, declared that there shall be no night there, no cessation from work, no time of unconsciousness of the Divine influence, no interruption of the study of the Divine ideal, no single moment, in which there is not the rest which comes of striving after purer communion with it.

To the historian of a semi-civilized people, seeking to account for the necessity of daily toil to so favoured a race as his, work may seem the curse of the Most Highest, but from the standpoint of Jesus in the manifestation of ideal sonship, it becomes the great privilege of humanity, a privilege shared in by all the children of the Father; its glory being that, like Sorrow, it deepens the communion between the Eternal and ourselves, for ceaseless activity is the law of the Divine Being, and in so far forth as we are loyal to the law, may we become *fellow workers* with Him. Like the other conditions of everyday life, Work is a sacrament designed to give reasonable satisfaction to the religious sentiment, when accepted, not as a curse, not as a means of freeing ourselves from *ennui*, nor as

a pleasurable relief to our kindly feelings, but as what the revelation declares it to be—the *outcome and proof of oneness with the Father, the result of childlike relationship with Him, the partnership in His great purposes of good*. Let us but be loyal to the revelation; having accepted the ideal Son as the new and living way unto the Father, let us be like unto him in all things, making it the meat and drink of our lives, to do the will of Him who hath sent us, and to finish His work, and little by little our apprehension of Him must become clearer; doing His will we shall know His doctrine. Here is seen again the simplicity which has been claimed as the test of the Divine revelation. The churches have made the basis of the Christian life a number of abstruse doctrines about God, those who will not or cannot give assent to them being shut out from the kingdom, while a multitude rush in to seek the salvation of their souls, in the acceptance of men's creeds and catechisms. The revelation and its presentation by the schoolmen are wide asunder as the poles; follow thou me, says the first, for we must work the works of Him that sent us while it is day. The voice of the second speaks on this wise, he therefore that will be saved must accept our definitions of the nature of The Incomprehensible One. Again, as in the case of Worship, the question is forced upon us; how far does the ideal exist among us? What hope for the brotherhood of Jesus, while men's notions are allowed to

stand in place of God's revelation ; while views and schemes and systems, ignore the one bond of union, loyalty to the ideal son? " This is the work of God, that ye should *be loyal* (πιστεύετε) to him whom he hath sent."

Verily, those words are worthy of the revelation of God. They are spirit and they are life, shewing to the religious sense, eternal title deeds which cannot be resisted or gainsaid. They may satisfy us, that whoever wrote that fourth gospel in the latter days, had received something at any rate of the great gift of Jesus to his brethren, for they are words which flash the glories of the unseen and eternal through the work of life, making all talk about its curse seem petty and ridiculous. Not only do they do this, but they add a new element, they throw a new glory over work, the like of which had been beheld of no seer of old time, nor had been disclosed by any prophet of the past. Herein lies their unsurpassed worth—that the work of God was not loyalty to an ideal Sonship, *but to a perfect Son* ; love for a perfect life *incarnate*, love for and loyalty to *the one* who was himself the way, devotion to another realizable person than self, which could make the triumph over self complete, and so the cross of Jesus became the symbol of Christendom, and when the day comes, that instead of being a bauble for a woman's neck, or an embellishment for a book of devotion, it once more becomes a spirit, the spirit of self-surrender, the sign

manual of him who came to work the will of Him that sent him and to finish His work, the gospel of the Father and the Son must go forth again conquering and to conquer, because it alone takes of the things of God, and shews them unto men, alone brings the key to the enigmas of our daily life, making home relationships the incarnations of a Divine presence, our life's sorrows the marks of fellowship and oneness with the Eternal, and lifts up our daily toil (a thing from which we so often shrink, of which, perchance, we are sometimes even half ashamed) and shews it to us, sparkling with the dazzling splendour that shines forth from behind the throne of the Eternal Uncreate. Conformity of life to the ideal makes us sharers,—awful as may be the revelation—in the work which proceedeth forth from that throne. Loyalty to the ideal Son gives us an impetus and power to thus become sharers in it, which no commandment could ever suffice for, no philosophy could ever supply. Work, in the light of the revelation, springs out of love for a Person in whom all we are brethren, and love for that Person manifests itself in work, done even as his was done, to fulfil the will of Him that sent him. Thus, once more does the revelation make appeal to the religious sense, the religious sentiment in the nature of man, offering to each one through the glory of work, an entrance into the Divine presence, a power to live as seeing Him who is invisible. It comes to "the pilgrim sighing

after his distant home," not with stern words of rebuke, "flee from the wrath to come," but with the tones of brotherly love, of a wide all-embracing sympathy—"Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Never sure did any age more than our own, need to listen to the voice of the ideal son, for never was there one more marked by restlessness. Going apart if we will for a moment, from the turmoil of politics, the boasting of science, the wrangling of theology, the hubbub of trade, we may catch the words of one meek and lowly of heart, offering alike to statesman, philosopher, priest and trader, rest not from work, but *in work*, his own rest, oneness with the Father, by likeness to himself. Learning of him, we see that what we are accustomed to call our business in life is really but one of its *accidents*; *the sphere* in which for the moment, it is ours to do the work of God and become perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect.

Thus the revelation of Jesus is a protest against men's Christianity, which can so far *misunderstand* the ideal, as to talk of labour being a curse, *despise* it for the sake of what it is pleased to call the religious life, or *exalt* it into the place of the work of God, thereby making the means the end. These strongly marked tendencies of the day take hold of and influence the mind, because they are imperfect realizations of the Divine ideal; their aim at the ideal gives them the power which they have. If they were

falsehood, pure and simple, they would cease to hold in subjection, souls which are thirsting for the Divine. Because they are attempts, however one-sided, to make the truth apprehended to those who seek for the truth, they are powerful ; because they are men's views, and not the gospel of the Son, they are powerful for evil. Never probably was harder blow struck against the Divine revelation, and never was stronger bulwark built for the support of man's misconception of it, than by the greatest of the Popes, Gregory the seventh, when, putting asunder what God had joined together, he made the ministers of Jesus into an unnatural caste ; a caste affecting superiority in virtue of their abjuring the holiest sacraments of God's grace, the relationships, the duties, the sorrows of family life. Men had gone out of the world before Gregory's time, in hopes of saving their souls, or in hopeless despair at the infamy around them, but now their errors received the authority of the head of the church, now the vicar of Jesus Christ set himself deliberately to reverse the teaching of his master.

Grand was the victory for ecclesiastical systems,—fatal was the blow to the religion of Jesus. Before long, another step was made and the religious caste became divided into the more and less holy, the “religious” and the “secular” ; the revelation of God was turned upside down, the new gospel being that the further man went from his brethren, the nearer he drew to the Divine. It is no wonder that this falsifica-

tion of the revelation is amongst us to-day as of old, and common to all the churches, for it springs from out of the animal instinct—love of self. To make the salvation of the soul from the wrath of God, the being's end and aim ; to make a bargain with the Eternal, for so much happiness in the future, on condition of giving up an infinitely less amount in the present ; to despise the lower nature, no less God's gift, than the spiritual nature, comes out of that desire to propitiate One opposed to us, at enmity with us, which we have seen characterising man from early times—the spirit of slavery, the bondage of self, from which it was the mission of the ideal son to free us. It will, it must free us, if we accept it in place of men's misrepresentations of it, because in its light *every occupation of life becomes equally sacred* as it glows in the light of the glory of the work of God, our doing His will in loyalty to him whom He hath sent. Let us away with this miserable confusing distinction between sacred and secular, arising as it does from a total misconception of the glory of work. Between our various callings in life, there can be no degrees of sacredness ; whether we guide a plough, or govern a kingdom ; whether we buy, sell and get gain, or sell all that we have and give to the poor ; whether we speak in the senate or minister in the church ; the Divine presence is with us, the glory of work may transfigure with celestial brightness our every action. For the glory of work, as revealed to us by Jesus, is not in doing this thing,

or that, but *in becoming like unto Christ* ; it is a quickening spirit, pervading equally every single act of life and making the commonest piece of everyday toil an act of partnership with the Eternal Father. And so can we understand the words of the ideal son, which are so generally explained away, or parodied—"seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you ; labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which cometh down from heaven ; be not anxious about your life, what ye shall eat, neither what ye shall drink ;" words translated by the churches, into either something quite different to what they mean, or treated as a commandment to stand aloof from the duties of common life. The work of God, the work which shall abide the day when it is tried by fire, is to bring into every action the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of ideal sonship, which is the bond or religion of the brotherhood of Jesus. Hence between the anxieties which sit near the throne and the cares of daily household management, there is no difference ; the highest and the meanest duties alike giving us a sphere, in which to do the will of Him that sent us and to finish His work ; various parts of earth's landscape, they are all alike bathed in the sunlight of the Eternal.

While the revelation of the Father and the Son thus rebukes low ideas about the duties of our life, none the less is it a protest against the tendency of the age *to confound those duties with the work of God.*

We must needs neglect the tasks which lie at our

door, to engage in so-called deeds of mercy, often only another name for the encouragement of pauperism ; we busy ourselves, to the verge of delirium, with church work, missionary work, school work and the like, leaving no time for the work of God—the deepening of spiritual communion with our Divine ideal ;—in fact, we may hear the religious world saying every day—“ Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out demons, and in thy name done many wonderful works?” Another school, angry with all this and seeing its hollowness, tell us, that our daily toil is our religion, and that to throw our whole soul into that, is better than setting before ourselves impracticable ideals. With the former persons, the work of God is supposed to be the salvation of their souls from hell and the everlasting enjoyment of a material paradise ; one hopes to win it by perpetual punishment of self, another expects to take high rank among the angels, in the same way that he won his seat in parliament. The Gospel of the other school is, “ Our time is a very shadow that passeth away, and after our end there is no returning ; come on therefore, let us make the best of the present !” All these fallacies fade away as clouds before the morning sun, in the light of the Divinely revealed glory of work. Each one of the brethren of the perfect Son has a calling in life, generally clearly enough marked out for him ; herein, each differs from another but all have a common work—the work of

God, loyalty to ideal sonship, to become perfect even as their Father in Heaven. The callings of life are but the pathways along the seen and temporal, by which we reach the glories of the Eternal. Straight or circuitous: brilliant with flowers, or sharp with thorns, they lead us to the Fatherland. How can we neglect any one of them, or deem the one more honourable than the other, when the same Divine light is over all and the one Divine voice sounds along the way? But on the other hand, how is it possible to mistake the pathway for the light which floods it or for the voice which woos us along? As soon might one dying of thirst pour the water brought him on the ground and keep the pitcher which contained it. In the light of the revelation of Jesus, our callings in life, our duties in the world, will be pursued naturally and to a great extent *unconsciously* ;

“The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask ;
Room to deny ourselves, a road,
To bring us daily nearer God.”

But only a road ; no more, no less. A road brightened by the light of life and one in which that light reflected from us, may in God's love reach to some fellow traveller benighted and far from home ; but none the less a mere transition from the seen and temporal to the unseen and eternal ; a thing to which it will become impossible to give overmuch anxious thought ; a condition of things in which action will be hearty

and yet to a great extent unconscious, because of the exceeding consciousness of the end before us. The homeward bound sailor marks his course as rigidly as ever and keeps his watch as carefully, but the white cliffs are already present to him and the thought of the coming embrace makes the present fly on till it meets the future.

But, and if along our homeward route, we become engrossed with the things of beauty or of pain, which may lie therein, and forget the work of God,—the end of our journey—the Divine light and the spiritual voice! What, if the momentary passing things along the way absorb our every thought and makes us sacrifice a changeless eternal hereafter, to an ever-shifting now! What, if in the senate we dethrone the righteousness of God and set up in its place a wretched thing called expediency! What, if in our excited search after the origin of life physical, we ignore the craving of humanity, for life Divine and spiritual! What, if in devotion to culture we make our righteousness the result of careful study of two different courses of conduct, instead of the unconscious imitation of One, who alone has offered reasonable “satisfaction to the religious sentiment in the nature of man!” What, if in our business and professions, we allow every moment to be absorbed by them, giving no heed to the home voices, the sacraments of Jesus; dealing with wealth as our own and thus ignoring, the brotherhood of Jesus!

What, if in our so called religious world, *delirium tremens* is positively being mistaken for the imitation of Christ; his precept, "when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," burlesqued by fancy bazaar flirtations, subscription list advertisements, published challenges to equal subscription to a chapel or a school, as if Christian almsgiving were a game of brag! What, if a spirit of "jealous watchfulness" against brethren has supplanted the spirit of Jesus! What, if heartburnings, bickerings and superciliousness are commended as signs of life! Then verily we are in evil case; the world has been turned upside down and we may well talk, though in a differing sense from the preacher, of the curse which rests upon our work. There are those who feel that a curse is being provoked; who deplore all this excitement, this make-believe, and yet see no way of escape from it, if the means for carrying on "Church work" are to be forthcoming. There are clergymen and ministers, who endure the annual bazaar with shame and humiliation; who are doing their utmost to put an end to the system, by which the undeserving jostle aside the needy brothers and sisters of Jesus, and are aided by the effrontery of misguided persons, who call their impertinent importuning, the work of God. There are those who have been compelled to give up the offertory system, because of the incomparable meanness of the faithful, unless influenced by sensuous excitement.

Are we to be met with the answer that this is all unpractical talk ; that organisation is necessary to carry on the Church's work ; that missionaries are dependent for their comforts on May meetings ; that hospitals and asylums would languish without balls and dinners ; that subscription lists would never be filled up, unless they were advertised ; that the "Catholic Revival" would lose its power but for its religious sensationalism ? Then, what is the confession but an avowal of failure ? What does it mean, if not that the ideal brotherhood of Jesus is a thing unknown among us, convenient enough to talk about in our churches and chapels, but not a thing with which well-to-do religious persons should have anything to do. A revolutionary, a communistic thing, such is a common idea about it, and there are people who really think that "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" is a watchword of Christian origin, instead of being, as it is, one of those half truths which come of men's imperfect expression of Divine reality. Jesus offered all three ; Liberty, because if men were made free through ideal sonship, they must be free indeed ; obedience was no longer respect for, or fear of mere law, but the outcome of oneness of thought, feeling and will with the Father. He ensured Equality ; because in the family of his Father, all were priests and none could be greater than another, save as he became more like a little child. He made Fraternity a real and intelligible

thing, because basing it on the only true principle, a common devotion of brethren to one another and to the will of their one All-Father.

The religious world generally knows its own business and it is probably quite right in saying that its elaborate organization, its excessive excitement, is necessary to carry on Church work. To say and do not; to bind heavy burdens on men's shoulders; to do works that may be seen of men; to make broad phylacteries and enlarge the fringes thereof; to take the chief place at feasts and the chief seat in the Synagogues; to be called by men, Rabbi; to shut up the kingdom of heaven; to compass sea and land to make one proselyte; to pay tithe of the mint and the anise and the cummin; to build the tombs of the prophets; to appear outwardly righteous unto men; is no easy yoke and no light burden. Lifelong toil, constant agitation, scheming, planning, devising, are very possibly the conditions of success. From the moment when the work of the Church took precedence of the work of God; when loyalty to a perfect son was supplanted by adherence to the teaching of men; when the blight of orthodoxy settled down upon the fair fruits of a Christlike life; from that moment the Divine revelation grew obscured in Christendom. For the channel through which it reached men was neglected; family relationships ceased to be sacraments of grace, a superior sanctity was to be won outside of them, the Church was

turned from a brotherhood into a corporation or a society, or a denomination, requiring many an iron rule in place of the one golden one and developing a ghastly activity, suggesting the power of galvanism on a corpse instead of the natural vigour of life.

Is it cause for wonder, if this state of things brings no "reasonable satisfaction to the religious sentiment in the nature of man?" Is it strange, if some men, more thoughtful than their fellows, seeing the sacredness of daily life made of no account in comparison of Church privileges; the growing knowledge of truth blasphemed by the churches and the sects; a "watchful jealousy" taking the place of that charity which endureth all things; should turn round a little fiercely on the religious world, and tell it that it carries a lie in its right hand?

"Come my people," so rings the prophet's voice above the storm—"enter thou into thy chamber and shut thy doors about thee, and (adds a greater than prophet's voice,) "when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret." Within those closed doors, in that communion between the Father and the son, there not only lies the "reasonable satisfaction to the religious sentiment in the nature of man," but from out of it springeth that life of ideal sonship, which in its passive phase of Sorrow and in its active one of Work, will make our common life, The Holiest of Holies, and our relations with our fellows the brotherhood of Jesus.

In short, the revelation would call us back through the gospel of Work, to the truth, that "so is the kingdom of heaven, as if a man should cast seed upon the earth and should sleep and rise night and day and the seed should spring up and grow, he knows not how;" the kingdom of God being not eating and drinking, but love and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. In the gospel of Sonship, we found the revelation of individual communion with the Father to be the answer to the craving of humanity. The gospel of Worship was that it became the articulate voice of the brotherhood of man, expressing that communion and aspiring after a deeper consciousness of it. The gospel of Sorrow deepened the communion of the children with their Father and their sympathy one with another. And now this gospel of Work lets us see if we be only true to the revelation, that the operations of God will go on within us and around quietly and unobserved, we ourselves indeed sharing in them unconsciously, because in every duty of life shewing forth the spirit of the ideal son.

This is not mere sentiment, pretty but unpractical talk. Jesus did not jest when warning his disciples against the spirit of restlessness and excitement, which is around us now as much as when he was going about doing good,—the spirit which is for ever crying "Lo, here is Christ, lo there;" he said "the kingdom of God is within you." It is we who have made a jest, and a sorry one it is, of the simplicity of his teaching, of the

truth of his revelation. Men ask for the living God, and the sects compass sea and land to make them partisans of an ism. Mr Murray, speaking of some of the South Sea Islanders, says, "they at that time professed to be of the Tongan religion, as it was called, *i.e.*, Wesleyism, and were shy of us because we, as they said, were of the Tahitian religion, *i.e.*, Independent.

. . . Mr Heath visited the island once, *but he was not allowed to preach, because he was of the Tahitian religion.*"* God forbid that we should judge the men who thus present to savages the gospel of the Son; but the system and the creeds which make such presentation of it possible, nay even a duty, we may and must denounce as antichristian, as destructive of the brotherhood of Jesus.

We are not left in doubt about the glory of work, for when, as is often the case, we do see it, its attraction is indescribable, its power over us, for the time at any rate, complete. We may have watched the work of God going on, in high places and low; we may see it when we have carefully looked for it, for the workmen of God, the mothers and sisters and brothers of Jesus, go about like him doing good, but not letting their right hand know what their left hand doeth. With them the work is unconscious, for they do not leave the path of daily duty to seek the work of God; *it comes to them* as they manage their households, living the life of Jesus over again to their children; as they

*"Forty Years' Mission Work in Polynesia and New Guinea," p. 285.

minister in holy things, whether at the court or in the church ; as they sit in their chambers or offices, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, bringing the poor that are cast out to their house, giving the cup of cold water the sympathy of Jesus, without the religious world even knowing of their existence, and out of the reach of a canvasser or a subscription list advertisement. God has his fellow-workers on earth, and the day shall declare it ; what did we do for Thee ? when did we do anything ? they will ask, and the answer will be, "forasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." And still they will wonder, *did what ?* for their work for God has been an unconscious one. They lived the life of Jesus, and without knowing it, they were as a city set on a hill ; a light that could not be hid ; they were often with him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and though they kept it secret and told no man in those days, men took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. Their prayers and their alms were done in secret, and their Father, who seeth in secret, will reward them.

For some centuries now the churches have been preaching the gospel of Salvation by Faith, or to be more correct—Salvation by Opinions. That has failed ;—let us go back to the gospel of the Son—Salvation by Works. *This is the work of God, that ye should be loyal to him whom He hath sent.* Bound to the Father in the ties of the ideal sonship, we shall

work as did the perfect Son ; the glory of work will transfigure every action of our lives, and when the time comes to enter on a new and yet nobler sphere of activity, each one will be able to say—"O righteous Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

THE GOSPEL OF THE HEREAFTER.

THE joys of the life to come have ever been a favourite theme of theologians and poets. A contemplation of them, a holding them up for the encouragement of a sorrowing and suffering humanity, marks not merely Christianity, but Brahminism, Mahomedanism and the later phase of Judaism. Milton's great dramas, stereotyped popular views in England, and that they are as fascinating as ever, is seen by the eagerness with which such a book as "The Gates Ajar" is received, and the well nigh universal entrance into modern hymnology of verses, such as the sweet rhythm of St Bernard and the like, which conceive of the blessedness of heaven on this wise ;

There is the throne of David,
And there, from toil released,
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast.

and of the meaning of the resurrection, thus ;

O how glorious and resplendent,
Fragile body, shalt thou be,
When endued with so much beauty,
Full of health and strong and free,
Full of vigour, full of pleasure,
Thou shalt last eternally !

As far as Christendom is concerned, the ideas thus set forth have a common origin. The Apocalypse of S. John, after many a struggle for canonicity, even in late times, suspected by Erasmus and repudiated by Luther, has taken its place among Christians as the revealed word of God, with some of them, indeed, as a literally inspired writing, and has become the source of the eschatology of the Christian church. It has been a court of appeal to sorrowful souls, against the wrongs perpetrated on them, telling of a deathless victory, a golden crown, a spotless robe for the faithful soldier of the cross. And it has answered the exact purpose for which it was written. The last of the Claudian emperors had been, and was not, but many a one had barely escaped his brutality, and was now cowering as he looked for the reappearance of this veritable anti-christ, who was to destroy the saints of the most high. The Son of Thunder, the one who had sought to sit on the hand of his master, who had begged to call down fire from heaven, even as Elias did, and consume the enemies who crossed his path, was well fitted to raise the drooping hope of the church, with the promise of the avenging sword of him whose eyes were as a flame of fire, and who should smite the nations and rule them with a rod of iron, and tread the winepress of the passion of the wrath of Almighty God. The conception was not a new one; the Anonymous Prophet had given a like vision to the nation, as this Jewish Christian Apostle now displayed before the

suffering church. To the former had been shewn, one coming from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ; treading down the people in his anger, and trampling them in his fury, till their blood was sprinkled on his garments, for the day of vengeance was in his heart, and the year of his redeemed had come. And then, as in the one case, there should follow in Jerusalem the voice of joy, and the sound of crying should be heard no more ; new heavens and a new earth should be created, and all nations coming together to see the glory of God should look upon the carcases of the men who had transgressed, and whose worm should not die, neither their fire be quenched : so, in the latter case, the glory and honour of the nations was pictured as pouring into the new Jerusalem, when the first heaven and the first earth had passed away ; when there should be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain, and when the enemies of the church should have been cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

One cannot fail to identify the thought of the old prophet with the vision of the new apostle ; the voice of both teachers was addressed to men, down-trodden and faint-hearted, and the same scene rose before the eyes of the twain—a day of righteous retribution on their persecutors and a time of enjoyment and rest for the faithful. It is natural enough that this thought should have proved an inspiring one for the Church in all time, and that the vision of John should

have foretold to Christians, just whatever their special circumstances seemed to them to require. To one, "The beast" has been Mahomed—to another, Napoleon—to a third, Martin Luther, and to a fourth, the Bishop of Rome; while in the heart of many an obscure disciple, the hundred and forty and four thousand and the voice of harpers harping with their harps, the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures falling down before the throne, have sustained hope and faith through long years of waiting.

Popular theology cherishes the same ideas; our children are taught,—

There is beyond the sky,
A heaven of joy and love;
And holy children, when they die,
Go to that world above.

There is a dreadful hell,
And everlasting pains,
Where sinners must with devils dwell,
In darkness, fire and chains.

We accustom ourselves to think of those who have gone from us,—as,

Happy spirits, ye are fled
Where no grief can entrance find;
Lulled to sleep, the aching head,
Soothed the anguish of the mind.

All is tranquil and serene,
Calm and undisturbed repose;
There no cloud can intervene,
There no angry tempest blows.

Every tear is wiped away,
Sighs no more shall heave the breast,
Night is lost in endless day,
Sorrow, in eternal rest.

Our object being to find reasonable satisfaction for the religious sentiment in man and not to prop up the sentimental base, on which so much of popular theology is based, we must examine this kind of presentation of the gospel of the hereafter, in the light of the revelation of Jesus. The Protestant sects have as large a pantheon as the Roman Catholic. They worship the First and Second person in the Holy Trinity; sometimes, but very seldom, the Third, and they worship the Bible and Heaven, by which is understood a place of perfected and endless material enjoyment. Recalling what were found to be the constituents of worship; the *Contemplation* of modern Christianity is not so much of the perfect holiness, beauty and love which centres in the Eternal One, as of the blissful company of the redeemed; *Aspiration* is less for a deeper communion with the uncreate ideal, than for the streets of gold and the harmony of celestial voices; and to what, then, can be the *Devotion*, to what the Worship, save to these things, for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. Are we met with the rejoinder that these things are but symbols to the faithful and that we are treating poetry as if it were prose? The first is the answer of the idolator all over the world

and in all time ; true, as regards a small number of the educated, false, as regards the masses. The second has no force when we remember, what there was occasion to remark before, that poetry has hold on a people, only so far as it is the expression of national feeling and belief. Milton, in one sphere, Watts in another, have done more to prop up a Calvinistic creed and the idea of a material paradise, than all the sermons that have been preached ; the religious poems of Keble, the exciting hymns of Faber, have given unexampled vigour to hymnology ; the one being the most successful propagandists of ecclesiastical order, and the other (with a few notable exceptions, expressing the very highest tones of spiritual worship), adding to the attractiveness of an already too sensuous religion. Hymns, more especially when aided by music accompanying a thousand voices, are about the mightiest weapon of any church, as must have been plain to those who watched the American Revivalists in England. Of what surpassing importance it is, that such a power should be made use of to raise the worshipper from the things of sense ; to carry him for awhile into a spiritual region, where the jasper gates and the sapphire throne are forgotten, in the contemplation of *One better than the best conceivable*.

In most striking contrast with the effusiveness of the Christian world, on the character and enjoyment of a future life, is the reticence, nay almost the silence of

Jesus. That life was always present to him and his references to it were frequent, but his heaven was not the paradise of our hymnology, but *the life everlasting*; to be confessed as brethren by him, before the Father, to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom, was the natural, intelligible end of loyalty to the ideal son. To sit on his right hand was not his to give, but it was his to proclaim that no man's sacrifice of self should fail of acceptance with the One above self. To them who came asking "what shall we have?" he had no golden crowns to offer, but he could promise that in the resurrection they should be as the angels of God. In a word, the glory of the hereafter, the glory that excelleth, as revealed by Jesus, was the fulness of answer to the spiritual craving and thirst of humanity. We know what that was; what it must ever be unless the universal consciousness be a fiction. Truer apprehension of the Divine better than the best conceivable; deeper, purer communion with Him was the goal of "the pilgrim pining for his distant home." Kingdoms and the glory of them; palms and shining streets; all these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me! was not the offer of Jesus; it was an offer to him from the adversary within. He crushed it with a withering sarcasm as the grossest insult that could be offered to a son of God. Shall we, his brothers and sisters, put baubles before our eyes to take away our gaze from the Divine ideal? Worship the great white throne more than Him that sitteth

thereon? Do not let us be deceived by any talk about the value of symbols; the moment we put parable in place of the truth it is meant to illustrate; when we put men's visions in the place of Divine revelation we are on the verge of idolatry. Children must be taught by pictures, but we are not to be always babes in Christ. As the little ones come naturally to distinguish between the truth and the rough way in which it was presented to their minds, so should we, if we would only let our spiritual nature have its freedom, come to smile at the uncouth representation which even the best of men sometimes make when they seek to bring us into the presence of the eternal beauty, righteousness and order. Men cannot show it, for the kingdom of God is within us; let us be loyal to the ideal, not to the best we know, but to One far exceeding what we know, and the ideal *will possess us, reveal itself to us*. In the glory of its light we shall for the time be unconscious of ought else, but as our spiritual sight groweth we shall be able to trace our homeward path onward to the source of light, to the glory that excelleth. And as when following some picturesque line of coast we find to our surprise that the goal is still separated from us by many an ascent or winding of the cliff, so must it be when we turn the point which conceals the invisible from us. Freed from the trammels of sense, God only knows how blinding for the moment may be the beauty of the ideal which shall flash upon faithful souls; but

if we accept the Divine revelation, this much is certain, that *the uncreate ideal must be for ever the object of our worship, not of our comprehension.* Thus does the revelation check those "non-natural" ideas about God which drive men into idolatry for the which there is cause to pity them but none to ridicule. It does not take of the things of men and make thereof gods for us; but it takes of the things of God and shews them unto men. If it came claiming power to shew to us all things that were of God it would stand convicted of falsehood by the religious sense, for if *the better than the best conceivable* could be ever fully attained unto, it would fail to satisfy the universal thirst which must need drink at an inexhaustible fountain? The stamp of truth is on the Gospel of the Father and the Son because it brings to man exactly what he must have or die; aspiration after his ideal filled and yet never fulfilled. The appeal of Jesus was to the subjective universal revelation of the Fatherhood of God, but what is fatherhood to a little child save an unknown entity manifested indeed to him in action, but which until the relative position of father and child be altered, he can never comprehend. The revelation of Jesus was the glory of Sonship, but as to the Eternal purpose, not even the Son knoweth but the Father only,—was his teaching. The great religions which men have set up in the world are convicted of human origin just as the religion of Jesus proves itself Divine. Buddhism has a Nirvana for the few, where

aspiration dies, for consciousness itself ceases. The Positive creed, whether of Confucius or of Comte, has nothing better to offer man than *the best known*. Mahomedanism would supply the faithful with "bright maidens and unfailing vines, such as in dreams would hardly soothe a soul that once had tasted of immortal truth." Judaic Christianity has its new Jerusalem. Popular Theology has a cunningly contrived scale of rewards and punishments. The revelation of Jesus is the revelation of *a development of aspiration after One better than the best conceivable*, a development which can therefore have no end, and which can be ensured by every single child of the eternal Father, in loyalty to the new and living way opened up unto him ; ideal sonship ; free loving obedience.

The gospel of the hereafter is then, like the others, a common gospel ; not for the few favoured ones, not for a class or for a caste, but for the whole family of the All Father. Its glory is not to burst on us, as though some new and strange thing had happened unto us ; but it will be the gradual development of our present, however rare, moments of communion with our Divine ideal. Rare enough they are, God knoweth, for we are so much taken up with our business, or our pleasure, or our sins, that there is but little time for even the contemplation of an ideal ; still, to all of us, let us hope that,

" Good God, not only reckons,
The moments when we do His will
But when the spirit beckons."

Assuredly He does ; how can it be otherwise ? for is not the one, as much as the other, the influence of the Divine within us ? These aspirations after the glory of the hereafter, are for all men in all the circumstances of their life ; they come to us in our Work, and make the music of the heavens sound above the hum of machinery and the hubbub of the street. They whisper to us in Sorrow, drawing us out of ourselves, with the thought that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is about to be revealed in us. They throng around us in Worship, like bands of angels, ready to bear us far away from the seen and temporal. They speak also of the glory of Sonship, for they are common to the malefactor and the saint, and thus testifying to the reality of the brotherhood of Jesus, they bring within the grasp of our apprehension that supremest glory of the Fatherhood of the Eternal One which, knowing neither beginning nor end, embraces creation as with the perfection of the circle.

Aspirations after the *One better than the best conceivable* are indeed the birthright of humanity, and evidence relationship with their source. The gospel of Jesus, whom we call the Christ, makes its appeal to these aspirations, recognises the truth of our birthright and bids us be loyal to it. It does not demand acceptance on the ground of "authority ;" it does not come disguised as an ecclesiastical system ; it does not depend upon wonders and

miracles, save so far as it works wonders and miracles in ourselves and those around us ; it does not separate us, as do the creeds of men, but it binds in one brotherhood the whole family of man. It offers "reasonable satisfaction to the religious sentiment in the nature of man," because it gives an explanation of those aspirations which are ourselves ; making them *the never-ending steps of a Divine progression.*

This is an age of materialists, they tell us, and the clergy warn and threaten, forgetting that the churches have become materialistic to the very core. The success of science may for the time attract too great attention to the seen and temporal, but if the revelation be true, if the universal consciousness of the race does not lie, the aspirations after the unseen and eternal will not cease to make their voices heard. In place of the material, Jesus offers us the ideal and nothing on earth can withstand it. Creeds may rot and crumble away ; churches may rock to their centre, but the "immovable basis of the religious sentiment " must abide ; earth's joys may dim, its glories pass away ; but the gospel of the hereafter which tells of Divine aspiration filled and yet never fulfilled ; an everlasting approach to *One better than the best conceivable* remaineth for us all ; for every child of the Eternal who through the new and living way draws near unto the Father.

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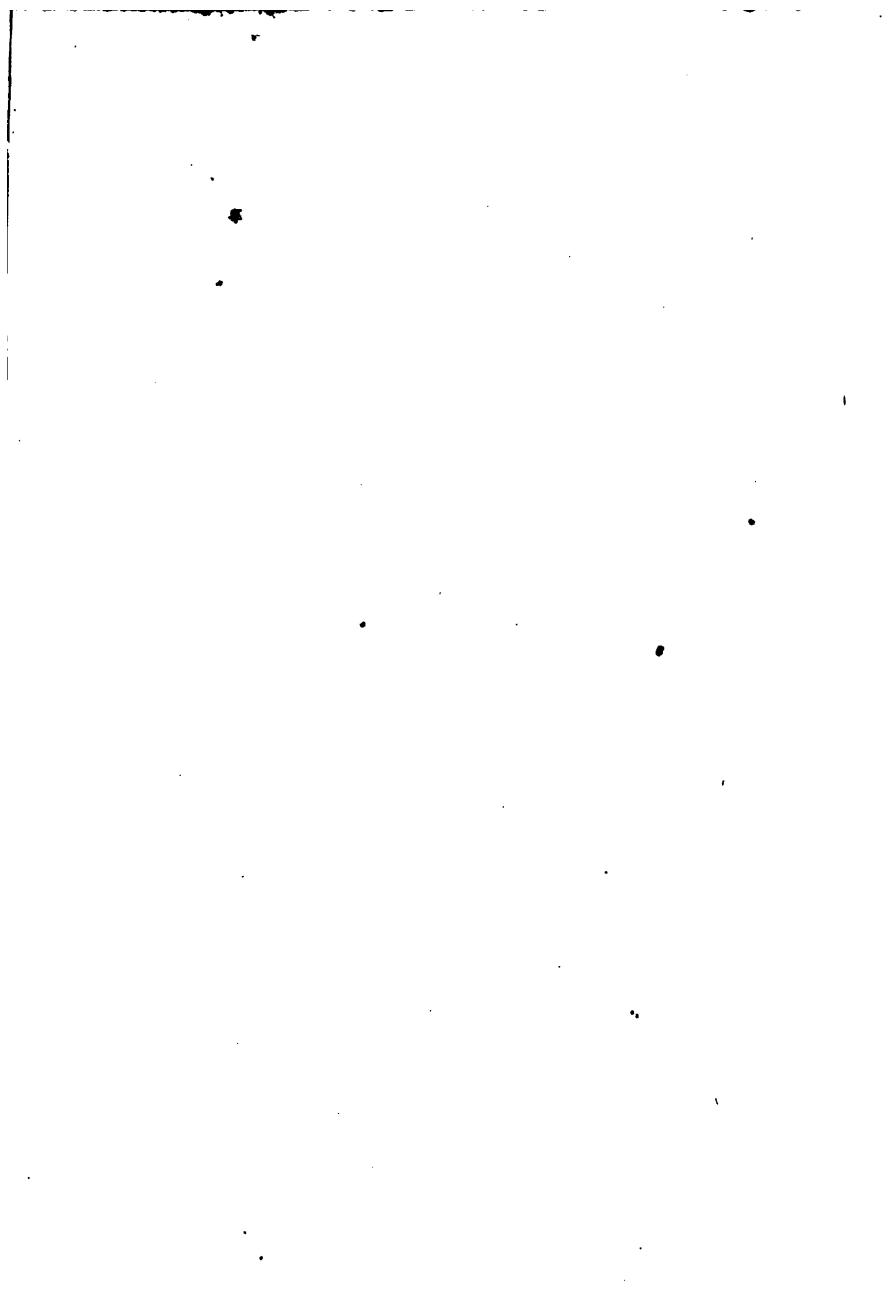
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